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MYSTICAL ELEMENTS IN MOHAMMED

BY

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PREFACE

Islam endures. It grows. It changes. Islam is a potent force in the world of to-day. We of the West may be appreciably aware of these facts without suspecting the moving causes which underlie them. We desire, however, to know these causes. We ought to know them.

After all, Islam is essentially the lengthened shadow of one man. Mohammed founded it and his spirit dominates it still. He is the fountain head of all the main Islamic currents which have grooved and moistened the soil of many lands. His word and his life are a court of perpetual appeal on the part of his followers throughout the earth.

We have not chosen to examine herein either the Faith or the record of its development. Mohammed alone engages us. Nor is the whole of his life our present concern, but only an aspect and portion which seems not yet to be understood in full measure. Mohammed the mystic is a greater figure than we had dreamed. It is the mystical in Mohammed which is herein exhibited. If it be a convincing exposition we find in it not only new light on the Prophet himself but hitherto unsuspected cause for the endurance and adaptation of both the Founder and the Faith.

In any proper historical survey of Islam the mystical current is seen to loom large. Its source, however, has not plainly appeared in the view. Greek and Persian and Buddhist waters have joined the stream and swelled it, but it arose first of all out of the deserts of Arabia,—not mirage, but a bubbling spring, a Mohammedan origin, the experience of the Prophet himself. We must, therefore, revise in this significant detail the geography of Moslem religion and ethics. This essay attempts to furnish ground and evidence for the revision. It may not be too much to say that progressive Moslems themselves, as they

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reinterpret their Prophet to the world of to-morrow, may find new values in the mystical elements within him.

This essay attempts to present the subject to both the technical student and the lay reader at one and the same time. The latter will find no annoyance, however, in details which appear for the former's sake, and the former may easily ignore the few coals which the author has brought to Newcastle. Transliterations are, for the most part, in the forms used by authorities quoted. The spellings, Mohammed, Moslem, Koran, and a few others are retained, where possible, in their most familiar forms. The dates enumerated are of the Christian era, unless otherwise indicated.

The author must bear the responsibility for the interpretation which he offers in this essay. His view has grown upon him out of many years of Islamic study and of mingling among Moslems. He does desire, nevertheless, to acknowledge most earnestly his debt to two former teachers, Professor George Foot Moore, of Harvard, and Professor Charles Cutler Torrey, of Yale. To the latter in particular is he indebted for instruction in Arabic and for sympathetic counsel in the preparation of this monograph.

J. C. A.

New Haven, Sept. 15, 1924.

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INTRODUCTION

There is good reason for some revision of the characteristic estimate of Mohammed. Great man that he was, the full story of his life and work is not yet told. The outer facts are very generally—and, one may say, fairly accurately—known. Our knowledge of the inner states, however, leaves much to be desired.

Too great emphasis seems to be laid upon the apparently "pathological" elements in him (see below). The structure of his success is made by some to rest almost entirely thereon. Upon closer inspection, however, these elements in him appear to be only a portion of the foundation and not at all the main support of his vastly influential career.

That Mohammed was to some extent a "pathological case" may be admitted, but he was too great and too successful to be explained by mere pathology. A most competent psychologist says that "it seems hardly sound to call a state abnormal if it has raised the 'experient' into a hundred-horsepower man."[1] The Arabian prophet was a mystic, also, though not in the full ordinary meaning of the term. We shall not find in him mysticism as a philosophical system, or as a consistent mental attitude; we do find, however, not only mystical experience, but also mystical method, deliberately and habitually practiced. There were in him elements which cannot be otherwise explained. He achieved results out of all proportion to causes which do not include the presence—and the practice—of the mystical.

A proper appreciation of these aspects of Mohammed's life gives us a more adequate view of him and of his religion. He has stood somewhat obscure behind the array of institutions which trace their rise from him, the system of faith seeming of so much greater significance than the founder himself. The

[1] Rufus Jones, *Atlantic Monthly*, Nov., 1921, p. 641.

very magnitude of Moslem expansion has overshadowed the simple lines of the Prophet's own person. Yet the stream may not ignore the spring which feeds it. However many tributaries it may gather to itself as it flows, it must regard forever the effective supply which gave it initial body and direction. In the case of such a movement as Islam, the increased volume and force of the stream add significance to the fountain-head. The importance of Mohammed increases in direct proportion to the development of the Moslem Faith. The whole history of Islam emphasizes the necessity of the clearest possible delineation of the Prophet himself.

We assume that the essential Mohammed can be known, that his development as the prophet of his people can be adequately described. Nöldeke, for one, seems to hold the contrary view.[2] Hirschfeld, also, says that "the years of Mohammed's youth and development as the prophet of his people will probably always remain shrouded in a mist."[3] It will appear, however, in this essay that such a view is neither necessary nor acceptable. We need not "darkly contemplate his shade through a cloud of religious incense." He may be seen as one who walks abroad at noonday. On the other hand, we must assert that he is not to be known by any historic or biologic formula, nor by any *a priori* method (*cf.* p. 14).

Strictly historical materials bearing upon Mohammed and upon early Islam are not as abundant as we might wish. It is not easy to say why Nicephorus, born about 758 A.D., and contemporary with the early decades of the Abbaside Dynasty of Baghdad and of the Omayyad Dynasty of Spain, dismisses Mohammed and the rise of Islam with the brief citation of certain Arab raids and the invasion of Syria under Omar, being scarcely more concerned with things Arabic than were the Arabs

[2] See Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns* (Schwally), 58, 69, 78, etc. Yet it is this scholar who worked out the most reliable chronology of the ill-assorted Koran.

[3] *JRAS*, Jan., 1914, p. 193.

themselves with the expedition of the Roman Aelius Gallus into their homeland at the dawn of the Christian era.[4]

The Moslems themselves soon after the founding of Islam became more interested in politics than in the life-history of their prophet. It was this political interest from which came the first rifts in the Islamic lute.[5] Even when, as Goldziher says, the religious interest became a decisive element in the movement, it was theology and not the biography of Mohammed which was emphasized. Biographical research was left to the collectors of Tradition (*Ḥadīth*), whose activities were not fully developed until the third century of the Moslem era.

To begin with, Mohammed had no Boswell. His first biographer is a century's remove from him. Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāḳ (d. 768) of Medina gathered stories, legends, and other materials of the Prophet's life and published them in a two-volume biography, according to the *Fihrist*, or '*Index*,' (p. 92) of Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāḳ al-Baghdādī (d. 995). The result was not perfectly satisfactory to all. It is recorded—also in the *Fihrist*—that some Arabian writers held the original of Ibn Iṣḥāḳ to have been rationalistic and untrustworthy. Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795), for example, decried him as being a Shi'i and the inventor of many of the legends and poems transmitted by him.[6] It is true that Ibn Iṣḥāḳ found the atmosphere of Baghdād and the friendship of the liberal Caliph Abū Jā'far al-Manṣūr more congenial than the conservatism of Medina and its renowned doctor, Mālik, with whom he had come into conflict while gathering his materials.[7]

What Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāḳ wrote, however, is preserved only in the recension of another, save for comprehensive and doubtless unaltered extracts in the *Annals* of Ṭabarī (d. 923), and in

[4] Muir, *Mahomet*, I, clv.

[5] Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 202. "Am Ausgangspunkt der Spaltung stehen zunächst die politischen Fragen." *Cf.* Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory*, 123.

[6] Brockelmann in *Ency. Islam*, vol. 2, p. 390.

[7] Do., p. 390.

quotations by the Shafi'ite lawyer, al-Māwardī,[8] of stories which had appeared in abridged form in the recension just mentioned. This is by Ibn Hishām (d. 834). His سِيرَةُ مُحَمَّدٍ, or 'Story of Mohammed,' is called by Nöldeke the very best of the extant sources for the life of the Prophet.[9] His work is a version of Ibn Iṣḥāḳ by way of Ziyād b. 'Abdallāh al-Bakkā'ī,[10] omitting many things mentioned by Ibn Iṣḥāḳ, and confining his attention to what pertained immediately to Mohammed's life or to the Koran, or which served as proof or interpretation; omitting anything disagreeable to relate, or whatever was not substantiated by al-Bakkā'ī.[11] This attitude is quite in harmony with a tradition whose value may be all the greater for its transmission through the Basrite freethinker, al-Jāhiz (d. 869), *viz.*, that if any verbal tradition attributed to Mohammed be found to be in harmony with the Koran it is to be esteemed his own utterance whether he actually uttered the words or not.[12]

Such are the chief strictly historical materials. And yet we have for our present undertaking a most excellent and satisfactory source,—the Koran itself—an original and unimpaired document. The text of the Caliph Othman, which, as Goldziher says, is still regarded as "der Masoretische Text,"[13] is to be regarded not only as the "ipsissima verba" of Mohammed, but almost as the "novissima verba" as well, for *Ḥadīth* is not rated as highly as formerly. Goldziher has warned us of the danger of too great reliance upon *Ḥadīth*.[14] Professor Snouck remarks

[8] de Goeje, art. on Ṭabarī, in *Ency. Brit.* (11th ed.).

[9] *Geschichte des Qorāns,* xiv. "Die reichste und beste der noch vorhandenen Quellen für die Geschichte Muhammad's"—very true, if objective sources be meant, but for certain all-important materials the Koran itself is "best", viewed as autobiography.

[10] Ibn Hishām, 3, line 15.

[11] Do., 4, line 6f.

[12] Goldziher, *Muh. Stud.,* II, 48-49. "Was man euch nun als meinen Spruch mittheilt, das musst ihr mit dem Gottesbuch vergleichen; was mit diesem im Einklang ist, das ist von mir ob ich es nun wirklich selbst gesagt habe oder nicht."

[13] Goldziher, *Vorlesungen,* 204.

[14] Do., 84, etc.

that Prince Caetani and Father Lammens, especially, have greatly "disturbed this illusion" of Tradition.[15] Even the seven thousand "genuine" (*ṣaḥīḥ*) traditions culled by Buḫārī from a mass of 600,000 may be used only with the greatest caution, for many are weak-kneed before close scrutiny. "During the very first century of Islam the forging of Traditions became a recognized political and religious weapon," says Nicholson.[16]

As for the Commentators, they, too, must be used with caution. That their guidance is not always safe may be seen from examples of false derivation, such as, that the Christian Apostles were called حَوَارِيّ (apostles) because they were fullers (from حار, to whiten) and that a "*houri*" is one at sight of whom the beholder is "astounded" (the same حار again).[17] But our concern is not primarily with what others thought of Mohammed, especially when they were neither 'Companions' (*saḥābun*, اصحاب) of his nor yet the 'Associates of Companions' (*tābi'un*, تابعون); rather, it is with what Mohammed thought of himself. For this purpose the Koran is worthy of direct appeal and of the strictest possible interpretation, without subjecting its texts to any 'preferential' use (اِسْتِحسَان) whatever. We deal thus with simple, original elements and not with technicalities into which these may have developed.[18] We have in them the fundamental and almost wholly sufficient sources for a clear view of Mohammed, for our inquiry into the causes of his unwavering confidence, skilful assertion, and phenomenal success. It is the Koran which shows the mind of Mohammed, even when he was saying more than he himself was at the time aware of.

[15] Hurgronje, *Mohammedanism*, 23.
[16] *Literary History of the Arabs*, 145.
[17] Penrice, *Dictionary of the Koran, in loco.*

[18] As in the Ṣūfī (صوفيّ) movement, for example, the elaborate system of philosophical mysticism, with its Koranic, Hellenistic, Persian and other ingredients.

I

THE CASE FOR PATHOLOGY

Before entering directly upon our constructive argument it will be necessary to consider the case for pathology. That materials exist for such a case is beyond dispute. That pathology, however, provides an adequate explanation of Mohammed's consciousness of his vocation, and of the place he secured in the estimation of his contemporaries, is open to serious objection; and yet this has been a formula by which the essential Mohammed has long been interpreted.

Dr. A. Sprenger, possibly, has made the most of the pathological.[19] According to his treatment of the matter, Mohammed was afflicted with a very pronounced malady which in its distinctive form as seen in him is more common in women than in men. He was a hysteric, a "visionär," subject to hallucinations. When the paroxysm was light there were movements of the lips and tongue, a rolling of the eyes from side to side, and automatic swaying of the head. When severe, the paroxysm was cataleptic. Then—and not before—his will was overpowered but consciousness was usually retained, and to that extent the attack differed from epilepsy.[20] His ailment, continues Sprenger, was not altogether physiological; it was more a disease of mind than of body and the effects more imaginary than real,[21] in times of light paroxysm, in particular.

Sprenger's discussion of the "imaginary" aspects of Mohammed's affliction is very exhaustive, with his use of original sources and of parallels from the general field of psychic phenomena. He roamed widely through the midst of persons "possessed," and marshaled data in proof of his contention that the "revelations of Mohammed were dreams, phantoms,

[19] *Das Leben Muhammads,* I, 207 ff.

[20] Do., 208. "Und insofern unterschieden sich seine Anfälle von Epilepsie."

[21] Do., 209. "Mehr eine Krankheit des Geistes als des Körpers und die Leiden mehr imaginär als wirklich."

and fantasies.''[22] We must admit, however, that his treatment does not close the question of the method and substance of Mohammed's religious reformation. It does not indeed settle the question as to whether the one ''possessed'' gets a clearer insight than other men into the Divine, and, especially, whether what he learns is mediated supernaturally or is intuitive.[23] It is further true that lesser analogies do not explain the core of a great fact. Pathology does not explain Mohammed's insight; and what it does explain seems to be neither vital nor cogent. Professor D. B. Macdonald once suggested that it would be fruitful to inquire into ''the precise pathology of Mohammed's psychology'';[24] but it is doubtful whether any further investigation of Mohammed's abnormality will prove worth while. In any event, bodily pathological conditions, be they ever so interesting, do not solve our problem. Mohammed's mental state is far more important.[25] Sprenger's thesis and his exhaustive treatment of it leaves the real problem unsolved.

The value of pathology for an understanding of Mohammed has been insisted upon by various other scholars. Some have gone further than Sprenger in one direction, namely, in the development of the theory of epilepsy. Among them are Theodor Nöldeke, D. S. Margoliouth, D. B. Macdonald, and two translators of the Koran, Rodwell and Palmer. In the main, however, they all range themselves alongside the German physician. Palmer held that Mohammed's revelations were the natural outcome of his physical constitution. ''From youth upwards he had suffered from a nervous disorder which tradition calls epilepsy, but the symptoms of which more closely resemble certain hysterical phenomena...and which are almost

[22] *Das Leben Muhammads,* I, 215.

[23] Do., 266. ''ob begeisterte Visionäre tiefere Blicke in das Göttliche thun als andere Menschen, und überhaupt, ob es ein auf übernatürliche Weise vermitteltes, oder ein intuitives Wissen gebe.''

[24] *Religious Attitude and Life in Islam,* 302.

[25] *Cf.* J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness,* 369.

always accompanied with hallucinations," says Palmer.[26] Rodwell thought that the visions with which Mohammed's mission began "may actually have occurred during the hallucinations of one of the epileptic fits from which Mohammed from early youth appears to have suffered."[27] That is, there was causal connection between the physical and psychic state and inspiration,—in the words of Sprenger, "Analogie zwischen den auf Einbildung beruhenden physischen Leiden hysterischer Personen und zwischen ihren Visionen und Inspirationen."[28] Nöldeke is more moderate than Sprenger, and yet quite as emphatic as the latter, and as emphatic as Palmer and Rodwell, on the general point we are discussing. He maintains that an epileptic condition was the soil whence came the revelations, that vision and dream are to be interpreted by the diseased condition of body and mind.[29] He lays stress upon the widely accepted traditions that Mohammed had severe attacks attendant upon revelation, froth appearing at the mouth, head drooping, face blanching or reddening; that he cried like a camel colt, and perspired profusely even in winter time.[30] Nöldeke accepts all these phenomena as causally related to revelation. He says that al-Wākidī defined the attack (بُرَحَآء)[31] as 'fever', but that others, following the Byzantines, have [rightly] called it epilepsy.[32]

[26] *The Qur'an*, Introduction, xx-xxii, xlvi.

[27] *Koran*, p. 21, note 1.

[28] Sprenger, *op. cit.*, 232. We might call Sprenger a "medical materialist."

[29] Nöldeke, *Geschichte* (ed. Schwally), p. 26, "Aus diesem krankhaft bewegten Körper—und Geisteszustande sind die Visionen und Träume zu erklären."

[30] Nöldeke, *op. cit.*, 24, "Muhammed, erzählt man, ward beim Empfange der Offenbarung oft von einem schweren Anfall ergriffen, so dass ihm der Schaum vor der Mund trat, das Haupt niedersank, das Antlitz blass oder glühend roth ward; er schrie wie ein Kameelfüllen; der Schweiss troff dabei einst von ihm nieder, obgleich es winterliches Wetter war." *cf.* note 5. See Krehl, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, II, 156, 17 f.

[31] *Op. cit.*, p. 24. *cf.* Sprenger, *op. cit.*, 208, "Wechselfieber, die herrschende Krankheit in Madyna."

[32] It is worthy of note that Gibbon, historian of the Byzantine world, calls Mohammed's epileptic fits "an absurd calumny of the Greeks."—*Decline and Fall* (Everyman's Lib.), Vol. V, 270, *cf.* p. 228.

To Margoliouth, also, the process of revelation is closely bound up with epileptic visitations, "the importance of which is not lessened by the probability that the symptoms were often artificially reproduced."[33] He says, "that process was attended by a fit of unconsciousness accompanied (or preceded) at times by the sound of bells in the ears or the belief that someone was present;[34] by a sense of fright, such as to make the patient burst out into perspiration; by the turning of the head to one side; by the foaming at the mouth; by the reddening or whitening of the face; by a sense of headache."[35] The Oxford professor's opinion does not seem to be altogether clear. He seems to be influenced by two kinds of traditions, one kind in support of light epilepsy and one in support of heavy,[36] while still admitting that "some of the signs of severe epilepsy—biting of the tongue, dropping what is in the hand, and gradual degeneration of the brain-power—were wanting."[37] He knows of only two cases "in which the fits were not subject to Mohammed's own control, once when he fainted at the intense excitement of the battle of Badr, and once when he had himself bled after fasting";[38] yet he speaks of the revelation process being attended by "a fit of unconsciousness." Further, it is likely that he thinks that some of the visitations came unexpectedly, although he would not hold Muir's untenable position that all "inspiration descended without any previous warning even to the Prophet."[39] There were indeed times when the people also had warning of the visitation. On a certain occasion Mohammed had been speaking to the people, when a man

[33] *Mohammed,* 45 f.

[34] *Cf.* Sprenger's "Hallucinationen des Gehörs und des Gesichtes" (*Das Leben,* 210). Nöldeke gives a list of the ways in which revelation came to Mohammed (*op. cit.,* 22-23).

[35] *Mohammed,* 46.

[36] As in al-Wākidī, 37½, cited by Muir, *Mahomet,* ii, 88.

[37] *Mohammed,* 46.

[38] Do., 46. *cf.* Ibn Hishām, 444, line 16. *cf.* note 19 (above, p. 6).

[39] *Mahomet,* ii, 88.

arose and asked the Prophet if any good could come of evil. The Prophet remained silent. The people said, "Inspiration is coming upon him," and they were "as still [as hunters] upon whose head [the hunted] birds [had settled in their fright]. At length the Prophet wiped the heavy sweat from his face and entered into the theme."[40]

If some visitations did come unexpectedly, others, thinks Professor Margoliouth, were "artificially reproduced"—at least the "symptoms" were thus manifested. Accordingly, whatever Professor Margoliouth's view of the relation of inspiration and epilepsy, we may infer from his own argument that Mohammed possessed some form of mental power superior to any physiological ailment, and some power of discernment not impaired by any "fit" of the moment. It is this *extra* portion of Mohammed's consciousness which Margoliouth admits, which neither he nor any other has as yet satisfactorily accounted for. To change the subject of Locke's phrase, "Allah, when he makes the prophet, does not unmake the man." There is something of Mohammed which was not unmade for the sake of prophecy.

It is not surprising that so much has been made of epilepsy. It has been intimated already (p. 16, note 30f) that great importance was early attached to records and theories of Mohammed's abnormality. The Arabic sources themselves contain many materials which lend substance to the view; such as those already cited (see p. 17f); and the tradition that "He was seized with a characteristic paroxysm,"[41] and the fact that beads of sweat rolled from him at times in spite of the coldness of the day.[42] Mohammed's contemporaries were quite familiar with

[40] Torrey, *Selections from the Ṣaḥīḥ*, 54, lines 17-20; Krehl, II, 211.

[41] Torrey, *op. cit.*, 40, line 1; Krehl, II, 156. فأخذه ما كان يأخذه من البُرَحاء It is this بُرَحاء 'seizure' which some have called 'fever' or 'ague.' *Cf.* note 30 above.

[42] Torrey, *op. cit.*, 40, line 3. *cf.* also p. 54, line 20, and Baiḍāwī, *Commentarius in Coranum* (ed. Fleischer), 394, line 20 f.

the extraordinary signs of his times of revelation. They had their own definitions of them, which varied at different periods of his career (see below, p. 79). Let it be noted carefully, however, that neither his friends nor his enemies of his own day ever mentioned fits in connection with his early life. Had there been fits, the dominant Meccan tribe of Koreish would certainly have used this occasion of reproach, but it does not appear among their numerous and insistent accusations. With regard to the later years, the years of his Mission, it is true that the Arabic materials do not point out conclusively the exact nature of the unusual outward appearances. Toward the last, however, the common impression was that the condition was that of holy trance. It was in this state that many thought him wrapped when he lay in actual death.[43]

The most recent comprehensive attempt to explain Mohammed in terms of epilepsy and psycho-pathology has been made by Professor Macdonald.[44] His general position may be exhibited briefly. It is as fair and as able a statement of the case for pathology as we have seen. He agrees to that degree of Mohammed's control of himself at times of epileptic experience which Margoliouth has pointed out (p. 17). His view seems to be that Mohammed's "fits"—whether induced or not —were in the main merely a device, or a circumstance by which he secured sanction for his "revelations." There is not quite the causal connection between the epilepsy and the revelation which others have insisted upon. There is the "diseased personality;" yet there is also "Muḥammad's genius."[45] The latter, however, is nowhere well defined—if indeed it may be! "The key to Muḥammad" is that "he was a poet[46] of the old Arab type without skill of verse, and with all his being given to

[43] Muir, *Mahomet* (ed. Weir), 497.

[44] *Religious Attitude and Life in Islam.*

[45] *Op. cit.*, 36.

[46] A شاعِر, "one who perceives or knows," "a seer." *Cf.* Macdonald, *op. cit.*, 21, 25.

the prophetic side of poetry,'' and who had a strange jumble of Jewish and Christian conceptions as materials for his prophetic uses.[47]

It thus appears that Macdonald explains Mohammed's inspiration by the use of the term ''poet,'' asserting that as a poet he is dependent for inspiration upon powers from the Unseen.[48] He holds no such view as that of Muir who ventures the suggestion that the supernatural influence, which appears to have acted upon the soul of the Arabian Prophet, may have proceeded from the ''Evil One'' and his emissaries.[49] But, says Macdonald, as Hassan the poet had his female *Jinni* who threw him down and pressed verses from him, so Mohammed had his companion (قرين) who was the source of his inspiration.[50] Mohammed, this authority continues, is not really a Prophet in any exalted sense: ''I know [he says] nowhere in the Semitic world any appearance like that of the great prophets of the Hebrews.''[51] Rather, this first of all Moslems is in part a combination of ''soothsayer,'' ''adviser and admonisher,'' and a ''hurler of magical formulae against his enemies,'' although possessed of ideas which raised him above the commonplace, and as well (sic!), ''a devout soul, if ever there was one, and a mystic in spite of his creed.''[52]

Macdonald parallels the case of Mohammed with that of Ibn Ṣayyād, the Jewish boy of Medina ''who exhibited exactly the same phenomena as he himself.''[53] This, we hold, is not a cogent parallel. One may indeed be thoroughly sceptical as to the story. There is little doubt that there was in Medina a boy who had fits. The details beyond that bare fact are most likely pure invention. And the analogy of the poet Hassan

[47] Macdonald, *op. cit.*, 20.
[48] Do., 24.
[49] *Mahomet*, ii, 90f.
[50] Macdonald, *op. cit.*, 19.
[51] Do., 14.
[52] Do., 17, 37, 39.
[53] Do., 34.

also, even if the story is strictly true, is of little consequence. Certainly "poet" is not the key to our problem, although we must grant that Mohammed did indeed have "skill of verse," Macdonald to the contrary. The Prophet shows, in reality, a fine sense of rhythm and of the sound of words. He certainly could have produced poetry, if he had wished to do so, and this ability he had in common with a host of Arabs of his day who were capable both of extempore verse, and also of more pretentious composition (see below, p. 80). The Koran contains many passages of really poetic character, such as *suras* 94, 104, 91:1-10, 11:44-46. Indeed the Koran as a whole is in manifest rhythm. Here and there, e.g., in *sura* 94, there is suggestion of exact meter—in this instance, the simple iambic *rajaz* (الرَّجَز). The lines run as follows, put as nearly as possible into the English equivalent of both the Arabic meaning and the Arabian meter,

Enlarged thy breast for thee, have we not?
And have stripped thy burden from thy back?
Stripped the galling burden from thy back;
And have we not raised thy name for thee?
There comes with thy trouble ease also,
Comes with thy trouble ease also.
And when thou hast finished, worship;
For thy Lord with zeal enquire.

Poetry in the sense of exact meter, however, does not otherwise occur, and to this extent—as well as in other particulars—Mohammed is not "a poet of the old Arab type," as Macdonald says he is. Rather, he employs the *saj'* (سجع), the measured prose of the *kāhin,* or soothsayer, as his medium of expression,—if indeed he did not virtually invent this form himself. His composition is not at all "a very elementary first feeling-out toward verse."[54] At any rate, his use of the *saj'* may mean nothing other than his choice for his own purposes of the usual mode of

[54] As Macdonald insists. *Op. cit.,* 30.

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utterance of mysterious knowledge. The strictly poetic, metrical forms which he might have used would have allowed him little, if any freedom. Furthermore, his higher calling as that of prophet precluded his resort to the metrical composition of the *Jāhiliyya* poets, and dictated his positive stand against the accusation that he was "only a poet" (see 36:69, 69:40, 41). No, "poet" is not the key to our problem.

In spite of the careful analysis by this competent Arabist, the Arabian prophet remains a complex and baffling character. "Diseased personality," "genius," a "poet without skill of verse," "devout," a "mystic,"—these and other terms of definition used by him seem to leave the subject yet worth the closest scrutiny. We are convinced, at any rate, that the "genius" of Mohammed is not epileptic nor psychopathic. No matter what his contemporaries, or even he himself at times, may have thought about it, it is a question, in the last analysis, of the action of Mohammed's own mind upon himself,—and upon others—and (without our doubting the existence of ecstasy, visions, significant dreams, etc.) not a question of abnormalities, of the activity of wandering voices (*hātif,* هاتِف), or disembodied spirits (*jinn* جِنّ), as the ancient Arabs held in the case of abnormal psychical phenomena, or as some moderns have held whose views we have been examining.

Let us now sum up our survey of the pathological as explanatory of Mohammed. It happens that a quotation from the most eminent living Arabist will aid us effectively in our dismissal of the case.

"How then are we to explain the starting-point of it all—Mohammed's sense of vocation? Was it a disease of the spirit, a kind of madness? At all events, the data are insufficient upon which to form a serious diagnosis. Some have called it epilepsy. Sprenger, with an exaggerated display of certainty based upon his former medical studies, gave Mohammed's disorder the name of hysteria. Others try to find a connection

between Mohammed's extraordinary interest in the fair sex and his prophetic consciousness. But, after all, is it explaining the spiritual life of a man, who was certainly unique, if we put a label upon him and thus class him with others, who at the most shared with him certain abnormalities? A normal man Mohammed certainly was not. But as soon as we try to give a positive name to this negative quality, then we do the same as the heathens of Mecca who were violently awakened by his thundering prophecies: 'He is nothing but one possessed, a poet, a soothsayer, a sorcerer,' they said. Whether we say with the old European biographers 'impostor,' or with the modern ones put 'epileptic' or 'hysteric' in its place, makes little difference ....Merely call him Mohammed, and seek in the Koran, and with great cautiousness in the Tradition, a few principal points of his life and work, in order to see how in his mind the intense feeling of discontent during the misery of his youth, together with a great self-reliance, a feeling of spiritual superiority to his surroundings developed into a call, the form of which was largely decided by Jewish and Christian influences.''[55]

Professor Snouck is just in this appraisal of the theories which we have been discussing. He is extraordinarily fair to Mohammed. He, however, yields his position too easily. Are the data, after all, insufficient upon which to form a serious diagnosis? The Koran itself, in which he would have us seek, contains data whose value he has not declared. Although not at all systematic, the Koran is to a large degree the diary of Mohammed's devotional life, the record of how, in spite of his lack of introspective power and knowledge of the nature of the phenomena of his experience, he found God. What it contains of ascetic and mystical data in answer to our inquiry is of sufficient proportions to warrant most serious consideration. It is this then to which we turn our attention, for in it we find new light on a puzzling complexity.

[55] Snouck Hurgronje, *Mohammedanism,* 42-43.

II

THE MYSTICAL ELEMENT

That there was something of the mystical in Mohammed has been granted.[56] That there was much is our present contention —far more than anyone has heretofore suspected; in fact, enough to afford a new view of him. Mohammed's religious experience was deep, sufficiently deep to include at once that touch of mysticism which no deeply religious man lacks,[57] the touch which had in Mohammed as a part of his being extraordinary value for the rest of him. His absolute resignation to the will of Allah is no slight clue to his success.[58] If that be so, that he was resigned to Allah's will, and if that will was known by revelation, we may rightly look for a touch—and more—of mysticism in him. In other words, we have a right to suspect, after an impartial reading of the record of outstanding revelations and discarding, as untenable, the theory of pathological causation, as well as that of imposture, that the mystical must bulk large in Mohammed's experience.

We may doubt at first whether the mystical was indeed the whole of his experience, and whether it pertained to the whole of his life. This condition may appear to have been characteristic of only the years prior to and during the beginning of his Mission, that is, around the significant fortieth year of his age.[59] One might very well assume that further age would alter naturally his powers of active perception, and of expression of the mystical in him. To be sure, the later portions of the Koran, utterance of the Prophet's last years, do differ much from the

[56] See note 52.

[57] E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, 84. Pratt, also (*op. cit.*, 18) says that "all intensely religious people have at least a touch of mysticism."

[58] Hunter, *Our Indian Mussalmans*, 60. Ahmad, the Indian, of whom Hunter here speaks, was no epileptic!

[59] Mohammed's fortieth year, instead of being a time of disillusionment, as with most, by which one means ordinary men, was the year of his illumination!

earlier, and lend themselves less directly to our present theme. They are the minutiae of administration in contrast with the more exalted declarations at the beginning of the Mission.

Then too, it might be pointed out that there was little in Mohammed's Arabian environment which was conducive to the full development and free exercise of mystic powers. With all their keen sense of the Invisible the pagan Arab had no real sense of God,—Mohammed was the Arabian pioneer to God. There was in Arabic no vocabulary suitable for the expression of mysticism.[60] What of the language of earthly, sexual love there was in the poetry of the *Jāhiliyya,* the "time of Ignorance," was scarcely applicable to the purposes of the new Faith. Indeed, Islam has, as a rule, debarred women from the mosques, holding that their presence inspires in men other than the right sort of worship in a place dedicated to the worship of God.

Furthermore, the practical needs of the new faith went far to preclude at once any great mystical development. Organization and administration soon occupied much of Mohammed's time and thought. There was no chance of success along with mystic contemplation. Then, too, life was normally too hard for an Arab to thrive on meditation. Desert life itself is hardy. The town of Mecca was not fertile. The days Mohammed spent in Medina were not always those of plenty. Once he himself and his followers had each to pursue his ideals on one date *per diem* for food. A tradition says that they never had enough food three days in succession up to his death.[61] The dream and the ecstasy were, for Mohammed, to be countered by hardship, and to be translated into reality and action. From the first his visions and auditions gave him something to do.[62]

[60] There was, *e.g.,* no model, no Song of Songs, such as the mediaeval mystics of Europe enjoyed and used, a Song which Origen held to be symbolic of the love between Christ and the Church, between God and the soul, which, on the contrary, is nothing but a frank glorification of sexual love.

[61] Torrey, *op. cit.,* 4, line 17; Krehl, III, 491; *cf.* Margoliouth, *op. cit.,* 236.

[62] Note *sura* 74, *et al.*

He was summoned to deeds far beyond the powers of a "crazed poet", or of a mere recluse. He was called not merely to the establishment of a new order, for no little part of his new religion was the delicate task of the conservation of values of the old pagan order, among which were the notable Arabic virtues of support of the weak, the entertainment of guests, and aid to those disappointed by unforeseen accidents.[63] His great task was a reformation of the existing state of things, from general abandonment of polytheism down to the affairs in detail of the family and the individual.[64] There was little time for brooding.

In all these things, nevertheless, there is no contradiction of our thesis. Mysticism may become a habit, and even a very deep-seated habit. Its character, of course, may change considerably. But there is nothing to warrant the conclusion that Mohammed was essentially less mystical at sixty than he was at forty, or less mystical in action than in dreams. Let us remember, furthermore, that the transcendental life was not his objective in reform. His career was not run in the realm of entirely spiritual activity. His spirit was not, as it were, sunk and lost "in the Abyss of Deity." All the forces of his soul were not concentrated upon a "supernatural object,"[65] with whom he might enjoy a colorless, cloudless union. We have no desire to attempt a classification of this actively resistant personality within the ranks of the so-called "true mystics."[66] As we examine the religion of Mohammed, we merely emphasize what there was of the mystical in it and in him.

Now Mohammed's religion seems to be, in its original form, a combination of three of the "four typical aspects of reli-

[63] *Cf. Koran* 2:172, Torrey, *op. cit.*, 24, lines 13-14, and 49, line 13; Krehl, II, 59, 194.

[64] Torrey, *op. cit.*, 14, line 8, Krehl, II, 12, bottom.

[65] Underhill, *op. cit.*, 106.

[66] *Cf.* Do., 96. *cf.* p. 9 (above).

gion."[67] He depended much upon the past. He claims to have been the restorer of the religion of Abraham (2:119, 124, 129; 22:7, etc.) the seal of the prophets (33:40 خاتَم النَبِيين), and a witness (33:44, شاهِدًا). That is one aspect. With the traditional there is also the practical. We have said that Islam is full of things to be done, duties—which are divine commands. This is another aspect. Of a third aspect, the rational, there is very little indeed. Belief was urged on authority; unquestioning assent and submission are required.[68] But of a fourth aspect, the mystical, there is much. Mohammed had experience which made him feel that proofs of God were unnecessary. God was real. God's prophet was neither *'arrāf* nor *kāhin* (diviner, soothsayer), but a true messenger whose state of revelation was, to use the words of Tennyson regarding himself, no "delusion," "no nebulous ecstasy, but a state of transcendent wonder, associated with absolute clearness of mind."[69] Mohammed's relation to God was a "solid bit of concrete fact." When he opposes pagan tradition, after his musings had turned into fiery ecstasy, it is because of this definite experience. This gave him his confidence and his persistence. It was the very heart of him and the core of his Mission. Apparently biographers, historians, Koranic commentators and traditionists have failed to see all this in its true perspective.

[67] Pratt, *op. cit.*, 14.

[68] *Cf.* "Think of God's gifts not of his nature," "To inquire into the nature of God is infidelity," *sura* 112, and other Koranic passages. Mohammed certainly is not to be condemned for any skepticism about the power of the intellect to grasp and describe the Infinite, or because he believed in God for his very deeds and gifts.

[69] James, *Var. Rel. Exp.*, 384. (*Memoirs*, ii, 473.)

III

MOHAMMED'S IDEA OF GOD

Let us turn our attention now to the facts themselves which lend color and support to our assertion regarding the presence and practice of the mystical in the career of the Arabian prophet.

We shall consider first of all Mohammed's idea of God, and especially his idea of the relation of God to the world, including himself. This is essential background for our theme. God is the great fact in Mohammed's experience. There is no God but Allah, "The King, the Holy, the Peaceful, the Faithful, the Guardian, the Mighty, the Strong, the Most High, the Producer, the Maker, the Fashioner, the Wise" (59:23-24). There is for the Prophet no sin to compare with belief in associates of Allah, or in other gods (4:51). Add to the fact of God the fact of Mohammed's apostleship and you then have the brief and simple dogma upon which hangs all the fabric of Islam (2:158; 3:1, etc).[70]

There is, as we have already noted, no explicit speculation on Mohammed's part with respect to God. His own description (in the narrow sense) of God is the 112th *sura* of the Koran,

> "Say: He is God alone: God the eternal! He begetteth not, and He is not begotten; and there is none like unto Him,"

which was revealed, say Zamakhsharī and Baiḍāwī,[71] to meet a specific request for a description of God. Aside from that, one is confined virtually to the "excellent titles" (الأسماء الحسنى *cf.* 59:24, 7:179, 17:110) as indicative of God's attributes, and therefore of his nature.[72] It is not, however, altogether impos-

[70] *Cf.* Margoliouth, 81.

[71] Commentaries, *in loco.*

[72] It never occurred to Mohammed that attributes, as later thought of, might impair in any way the divine unity. There are in all the Koran ninety-nine of these "excellent names," or attributes of God.

sible to trace some development (see below) in Mohammed's conception of the one God,—he gave some apparently thoughtful consideration to terms by which to name him.

The idea itself of Allah is the fruit of this man's gigantic effort, it is his unique achievement—in spite of the receipt by him of contributions from Jewish and other sources. In large measure, to be sure, the Allah of Mohammed is the God of post-exilic Judaism, with much the same attributes[73] which the Jews of that time assigned Him. There are, for example, no distinctions within the Godhead. He is Creator and therefore he is Savior, and he satisfies within Himself the full round of man's religious needs. He is one God. Mohammed indeed served himself heir to the fruits of theological progress among the Jews and other peoples as well,—in so far as he understood that progress. There was nothing among the Arabs as such—his own kindred—which could help him much in the formulation of his conception of God. What a tremendous stride, therefore, for one Arab to make! It was, we are assured, an altogether impossible feat save for the "revelations" which came to him.

The materials may indeed have come in large bulk from non-Arabian storehouses, but the workmanship with which they were fashioned was Mohammed's own, as was also the insight whence the conception of Allah arose. Mohammed's mind can be further seen in the method controlling the fashioning; it was the method of common sense. It was after all through the channel of common sense that his revelations came to him—this rather than through philosophical abstraction. The result he arrived at was altogether logical, the logic of common sense. It may be that Arabian society by its strongly democratic character tempered the result in so far as it tended to be monarchian and gave it strikingly ethical significance. The question of God was one both of numerical unity and moral nature and the

[73] *Cf.* Isa. 43:16. Mohammed was finally as uncompromising a monotheist as Amos.

Arabian prophet solved it by a balanced mixture of both qualities.

When the idea of God's oneness first became clear to Mohammed, the conception of God was mainly in terms of power. He is the God of human history (8:42, 3:11), known by his deeds. He had done wonders and mighty works for Israel. In Arabia he had swept away whole tribes of Arabs for their unbelief (91:15), and had beaten back armies of aliens (105). Hegel ventures to say that Mohammed knew God only as power, as "the general, irresistible force, or in other words, as the Lord" (*Rabb* رَبّ).[74]

It is true that the Prophet's term for God in the earliest utterances is "thy Lord" (رَبّك, 96:1,3; 74:3,7; 73:8,9; 94:8; 113:1; 114:1; 1:1), and that it is he who has power over men (41:14) and—as above indicated—the daybreak, over East and West, over the worlds and the day of reckoning. There is, however, abundant verbal and contextual evidence that God was early designated also as *ar-Raḥmān,* "the Merciful" (20:4; 19:91; 17:110; 2: 158),[75] and, for some time, was so addressed or referred to, at the option of the Prophet or any of his followers. In *sura* 26 the phrase occurs often, "Thy Lord (*rabb*) is powerful (*'azīz*) and merciful (*rahīm*)."And the designation *ar-Raḥmān* does not stand long without further company. In due course the "excellent names" of God grew numerous, by which, if we examine them, we may understand some further modification of God's sheer Almightiness. Although *Rabb* was used to the very last as a term of convenience (5:117), it was at an early period displaced by

[74] *Werke*, vol. VI, 226, quoted by Zwemer, *The Moslem Doctrine of God*, 107. رَبّ comes from a root signifying magnitude. The context must be relied upon for the meaning.

[75] *Cf.* Nöldeke, *op. cit.*, 92.

Allah as "the essential name" (اسم الذات) of God. The transition to the latter may be seen in such instances as 1:1, where *Rabb* and Allah are used coördinately, or in 7:52, where it is affirmed that "your Lord," "the Lord of the worlds," is Allah. As a tradition has it, "One is your Lord, even Allah."[76] With Allah as the essential name, *Rabb* and *ar-Raḥmān* drop into the category of mere attributes along with the excellent ninety and nine, the latter taking its place at the very head of the list, although the former never enters the actual list itself.

"There is no God but Allah" (e.g., 2:158, 3:1) is then the numerical sum of Mohammed's belief in the existence of God, in his Unity, his absolute Power, and in the other attributes of God as an Eternal and Almighty Being. Our discussion centers for the time about this term. It is Allah who is God, who, in a practical sense, is absolute, and who is alone in his might. Had there been, said Mohammed, in either heaven or earth any gods except Allah, the two worlds would surely have come to ruin (21:22). His saying that "there are not two hearts in a man" (33:4), might further illustrate his thought. Plurality of gods meant an apparent division of loyalty for the worshipper, and for the gods themselves rivalry, conflict, and disaster. There was no place for more gods than one (*cf.* 20:7; 16:53; 35:14,17; 6:101; 24:44), as Mu'awiya of Damascus said of himself and 'Ali with reference to the Caliphate, "There is no room for two stallions in one thicket," or as the Persian Ṣādi said of kings,

> "Ten dervishes may repose on one cloak,
> But two sovereigns cannot be contained in one climate."[77]

Common sense and logic! After an early unfortunate admission (see 53:19f.) that some good might possibly come from intercession with the "exalted" female deities, al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā,

[76] "A slave may not say to his master '*Ya Rabbi,*' for one is your Lord, even Allah" (*Mishcat ul-Masabih* II, 418).

[77] Leyden and Erskine, *Memoirs of Baber,* 129.

Mohammed settled into firm faith in and the unyielding proclamation of the all-sufficiency of the one God, Allah. The concession referred to indicates that Mohammed's mind was still in process of forming (even though he may have been courting popular favor by his admission). He said that the compromise was inspired by Satan (*cf.* 22:51-52) and quickly withdrew it. It is quite possible that he may have refrained after a while from the use to which he formerly devoted the term *ar-Raḥmān* for fear of arousing the suspicion that there lingered in him something of polytheism, or 'association' of gods with God (شرك *cf.* 16:53; 25:60-61).

Let us come now to a detailed examination of further pertinent materials. We have in reality seen that Mohammed's original idea of God was sociological, to which were added the requirements of his own inexorable logic and common sense. God was also a being who moved him, to whom he was related, the God of immediate experience and appreciation. It is this God who is of vast importance in our study of Mohammed. Although we doubt if even the most advanced psychology will ever be able to interpret him fully, we have, nevertheless, abundant materials for an interpretation, remembering always that we are attempting an interpretation of another man's experience rather than our own.

There are exhibited in Mohammed's autobiography, the Koran, four clear—and complementary—notions of God and his relation to the world and men, and to Mohammed. According to the first, God is very distant and exercises his absolute dominion from afar. This is our characteristic thought of the Moslem God, who, says Professor Pratt, "is very distant and as a rule has nothing to say to individuals."[78] Pratt is aware, however, of mystical elements in Islam, even though he may not have detected them in Mohammed himself.[79] This charac-

[78] *India and its Faiths,* 295.
[79] Do., p. 295.

teristic thought of ours as to the remote and autocratic Moslem God springs easily from Koranic suggestion, for it is said therein that God has power over all things (1:1, 44:6, 22:6, 5:120), including men especially (80:16f., 37:94, 7:177). All things belong to him, whether in the heavens, or on the earth, whether between them, or under the earth (78:37, 20:5, 16:54, 45:26, 30:25, 4:130, 131; 24:64, 48:14), and what men seem to possess, whether it be little or much, is merely theirs in stewardship and by his bounty (see 2:28, 16:5-8,12,14,82; 45:11,12; 31:19). After God had made the earth and stretched the heavens over it, he "settled himself" (20:4, 13:2) upon his seat (2:256), or throne (13:2, 85:15), in the highest of the seven heavens (78:12, 67:3,5, 2.27, *cf.* 67:16,17) of which Heaven (السماء) was composed, and from his seat in the heavens he orders the course of all things in the [two] worlds (عالَمين i.e., according to Baiḍāwī, the world of men, and the world of genii and angels).[80] He is "The Exalted," "The Most High" (16:62, 13:10, 2:256, 92:20), "The Self-Subsisting" (3:1),[81] who is not at all dependent upon worshippers or aught else for his existence.

Because the realm of God seems thus to lie out beyond the "two worlds",[82] many have drawn the conclusion that Mohammed's God is out and out deistic, that he functions somehow in exclusive isolation,[83] in a state of utter "difference" (مُخالفة) from all created things, and that he has set an impassable gulf between himself and his creator. So far, however, as the above attributes are concerned, we may infer that they have reference to God's character, to his superiority to any beings in lower realms,

[80] *Comm.*, I, 6, lines 15-17.

[81] Baiḍāwī interprets القيّوم as "He who always stands," needing not to rest, nor slumber, nor sleep (2:256). The word is really from the Aramaic adjective קַיָּם "abiding."

[82] *Cf.* the *Ṣūfī* notion, as sketched below.

[83] Zwemer, *op. cit.*, 21. *cf.* the notion of *tanzīh*, "transcendence."

whom unbelievers associate with God (59:23), as well as to remoteness. It is, after all, the merciful *ar-Raḥmān* who has seated himself. The Ṣūfīs have seen all this more clearly. They have arranged the worlds into three: the Invisible World of God, which is above and beyond the universe, and yet which compasses all and is the source of all; the Intermediate World of Angels; and the Visible World of Man.[84] God, to them as they read the Koran, is a first or universal Cause (57:3, 30:10, 59:24), the *primum mobile* (85:13), the source of all things (50:42), a transcendent deity (*cf. tanzīh*) who is entirely different (16:17) from all his creation, and yet One with whom union is both desirable and possible. God is not so remote as to be beyond the reach of men. And the Ṣūfīs are by no means un-Koranic in their conception.

However, before attempting to show other aspects of God as the Koran portrays him, it will be well for us to realize that, according to the Koran, man is not a non-resistant, inactive creature in the hands of a distant, all-powerful God. It is true, there are materials in the Koran which might be assembled in proof of either determinism or freewill, or of both. Mohammed's statements are seldom if ever generalizations. He thought usually in terms of concrete cases. He was not necessarily aware of inconsistencies, or contradictions, even when they were inevitably brought to his attention. Since all were from God, they could not be really contradictions or of a piece with contradiction (4:84, 2:100; 16:103). They merely set forth God's pleasure from time to time (13:39). Or, the Prophet may have thought himself overhasty at times in the recital of what was incomplete revelation (20:113, *cf.* 5:5, "this day we have completed, perfected, your religion"). Again, and in a larger sense, we must remember that whereas the West is a realm of Law, where precision and consistency are highly virtuous, and

[84] The Ṣūfīs felt the influence of Aristotle in this connection. *Cf.* the God of Aristotle, as in Wallace, *Outlines*, 73.

their opposites are to be condemned, the East is a region where the sense of law is lacking, and where contradictions are not real.[85] And so Mohammed could say "He (God) is not subject to question regarding what he does" (21:23), and, also, "Men will not be wronged in the least" (4:52, literally, to the extent of the fine fibre in the cleft of a date stone); that "God puts his own stamp upon men's hearts," and yet "they follow their own inclinations" (47:18), and "each man acts according to his own way" (17:86). Goldziher calls attention to the fact that God is said to let men wander (نَذَرُهم does not mean to cause men to wander) in their own disobedience (6:110).[86] "Whomever God guides," says Mohammed, "he is the rightly guided; and whomever he allows to stray, (يُضْلِلْ) those are wanderers indeed" (7:177). Or, as the poet Labīd has rendered it metrically,

> "Whom he (God) guides in paths of right is well-guided and happy-hearted. Whom he wishes he allows to stray."[87]

which does not necessarily contradict his (Labīd's) declaration that "Good or evil is as God wills."[88] In both instances he is doubtless interpreting both Mohammed and common experience.

[85] In the light of this fact the charge of expediency which Margoliouth brings against Mohammed seems not so severe. Margoliouth, *Mohammed*, 218. On the other hand a Western writer must not be thought unduly favorable to an Easterner if he tries to give a faithful representation of the mind of the East.

[86] *Vorlesungen*, 92. Standard translations of the Koran are not to be relied on at all points.

[87] Huber, *Lebīd*, p. 11, poem xxxix, verse 3,

مَن هداه سُبُل الخيْر اهتدَى ناعِم البالِ ومَن شَاء أَضَلْ

[88] Do., 8, xxxiv, verse 2, with vv. 1 and 3.

مَن يَبْسُط اللّهُ عليه إِصْبَعَا
بالخيْر والشّرّ بأَىّ أُولِعَا
يمْلأُ لهُ مِنْهُ ذنوبًا مُتْرَعَا

Returning now to the Koranic conception of God, we find further that God is not remote in one place. Anthropomorphisms do not stand long unrelieved. God is "everywhere" (واسع). "Whichever way you turn there is the face of God" (2:109, 92:20, 30:37,38). He "encompasses all things" (محيط 41:54, 4:125)[89], is "round about mankind" (17:62), is the "outside" of things (57:3 الظاهر).[90] Nor does Mohammed hold a pantheistic conception, even though he saw the proof of God in the whole universe. The very anthropomorphic features of his God, and his conception of God as personality saved him from pantheism. Rather, God's everywhereness was, to Mohammed, a necessary, practical notion. The Prophet had an appreciation of Nature, but did not worship her. He had a sense of the power within and even beyond her, but it was a Power which was not vague, but definite and personal. He was in manifest opposition to that attitude toward Nature which, atheistic and pagan as it is, differs little save in degree, whether held by certain pre-Islamic Arabs of the *Jāhiliyya* or by, say the far-removed Westerner, John Burroughs.

This leads us to a third Koranic notion, that God is very near in his personality. Whatever pains commentators may take

[89] Baiḍāwī says that the expression in 41:54 means "all things come within the compass of God's knowledge." *Comm.* 543, line 26f.

[90] This suggests Aristotle's "form" (εἶδος). The εἶδος is that something in every individual besides the matter of which it is made, which determines its kind, which determines what matter may become. الظاهر is that which is manifest, the outer appearance. Post-Koranic speculation frames the notion that God has outer form (الظاهر) and inner meaning (الباطن) like unto the Hindu "nama rupa" (नाम रूप 'name form') theory.

"to explain away any nearness of the Creator to the creature,"[91] the Prophet bids men "be humble and draw near" (96:19 اسجد واقترب) to God, for he "is near and ready to answer" (11:64 قريب مُجيب *cf.* 67:14, where God is spoken of as اللّطِيف the one who draws near, "der alles durchdringt," as it were; and 29:69). One recalls the saying in St. James 4:8, "Draw nigh unto God and he will draw nigh unto you." God, says Mohammed, is the fourth when three[92] are met together, the sixth when five are met, and he is with any number of men wherever they are (58:8, 57:4). He is, if anything, nearer the dying than the living (56:84). He is "the Exalter" (الرّافِع) as well as "the Exalted," and he makes intercourse possible between himself and his worshippers. While Mohammed designates the Meccan Ka'ba as the special seat of the worship of Allah, he held to no need, as did the Jews with their notion of Yahweh and the Temple (Holy of Holies) of an intervening priesthood between Allah and his servant. When one prays there is no need to use a loud voice (17:110), as if God were afar off. He hears even what a man's own soul whispers to the man himself (50:15. *cf.* 59:22). He is closer to one than his neck-vein (50:15). He comes in between a man and his very heart (8:24),—which reminds us of the words of Meister Eckhart, "I am as certain as that I live that nothing is so near to me as God. God is nearer to me than I am to myself."[93]

[91] Zwemer, *op. cit.*, 37, in connection with 59:24, where God is called المُصوّر 'the Fashioner.' *Cf.* Baiḍāwī's phrase الموجد لصُوَرها in *Comm.* (Vol. II, p. 326, line 13). Bue we are not primarily concerned with the views of commentators,—who had at stake certain theological interests of their day!

[92] This we take to mean any believers, and not, as a literalist would enumerate, for example, Mohammed, Abu Bakr, and Omar, as the "three." We are reminded of the Biblical "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

[93] Landauer, *Meister Eckhart*, 96.

He is "the grand companion,"[94] at times "terribly near,"[95] to use Professor Macdonald's phrase. He is also present as repose of soul (*cf.* 59:23, where God is called السّلام, the Serene) at times when Mohammed and his followers are in great need (48:26, 9:26,40).

Here is the point of passage to the fourth notion which we find in the Koran. God is not only over all and about all, not only at hand but, as the Christian Scripture itself says, "in you all." His "signs," says the Moslem Scripture, are in men's very selves (51:21, 38:72, 15:29). He is his own inner witness in men's hearts (96:13, 85:9, 53:36). He is then his own inner witness in the heart of Mohammed. It was this prize which Mohammed possessed—yes, obtained—through the craving of "his deeper instinct" for " direct revelation." Nicholson also admits that Mohammed "had in him something of the mystic," but asserts that "he set an impassable gulf between Allah and the world."[96] The latter portion of the statement follows closely the opinion of Nöldeke, with which we cannot agree, that "Mohammed's transcendental idea of God, as a being exalted altogether above the world, excludes the thought of direct intercourse between the Prophet and God."[97] Grant Mohammed sincere—and no one questions his sincerity, at least at the crucial period of his life—and we have no way of accounting for genuine revelation other than by direct and immediate experience, Mohammed's own experience. That "something" of mysticism in him was there by very necessity; there was no intermediary. God was not, as a phrase has it, "utterly beyond

[94] 'Ayesha testified that Mohammed's last words were, "O mon Dieu le compagnon le plus élevé (Hondas et Marçais, *El-Bokhari,* vol. 3, 246.)

[95] *Ency. Islam,* vol. i, 302, where God is represented as only near in terror. It is true that the wrath of God bulks large in the Koran, but Allah is a God of love as well as of fear.

[96] *Mystics of Islam,* 21. We have disposed of that supposition.

[97] *Sketches from Eastern History,* 23.

the here and the now,...above all that can be seen, or felt or known.''[98]

Mohammed had in fact a vivid sense of the Unseen, into which, as he discovered, he had certain powers of penetration. The ''thin veil between'' was easily and often rent in twain, disclosing, it may be, angel visitors filling apparently empty seats in a room, or *houris* in attendance upon the corpse of their deceased husbands.[99] Certain traditions ascribe second sight to him, as when—so it is related—he knew of the presence at Ghamīm of Khālid ibn al-Walīd,[100] called later ''The Sword of Allah.'' In Baiḍāwī it is suggested that Mohammed foresaw the battle of Badr (the crucial ''Day of Deliverance'') and the destruction therein of various men of the Koreish, and that he foresaw people of the Beni Umayyah ascending the (Damascus) pulpit and disporting themselves like monkeys in mockery of him.[101] Invisible power was constantly in operation in Mohammed's world. It influenced, as he thought, the conduct of man and beast alike. He observes that there restrained al-Qaswa', his camel, which chose the site of the Medina mosque,[102] the same power which restrained the elephant of Abraha in the advance against Mecca.[103] This Unseen was God.

There was, then, for him, the realm of the supernatural, the beyond, the dim consciousness of which is, according to Dean Inge, ''the raw material of all religion'',[104] and into which he penetrated. And there was for him, also, the natural world into which God came, providing him immediate experience of the

[98] Hastings, *Dict. RE*, IX, 84.

[99] Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, 88.

[100] Krehl, II, 177; Torrey, *op. cit.*, 41. *cf.* Jesus' saying to Nathanael, ''I saw thee when thou wast under the fig tree'' (Jno. 1:48).

[101] *Comm.*, 544, line 2f.

[102] Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, 214.

[103] Krehl, II, 177; Torrey, *op. cit.*, 41, line 13. حبسها حابسُ الفيل ''That (power) restrained her which restrained the elephant.''

[104] Quoted by E. R. McNeile, *From Theosophy to Christian Faith*, 127.

divine. In his naïve way Mohammed made, if we may borrow the words of McNeile to express it, "the attempt to realize in thought and feeling the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal."[105] The sense of the Unseen was, in Mohammed, the sense of God, primarily, and whether conceived of—or, better, felt—as far or near, God was always real, a Person, an Absolute, with whom was refuge (114:1, 113:1, 44:19). It was with him not merely an objective observation that God's spirit was in man (15:29, 38:72, 21:91, 66:22).[106] Nor was it merely a general observation, that "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth" (24:35), of which men themselves may receive a measure (24:40).[107] Jalālu-d-dīn Rūmī (d. 1273), the Ṣūfī mystic, may have had in mind some veritable Koranic or Traditional passage when he says that God declared to Mohammed, "I am not contained in aught above or below, I am not contained in earth or sky, or even in highest heaven. Know this for a surety, O, beloved. Yet am I contained in the believer's heart."[108] At any rate he was giving what to us is an appropriate version of the Prophet's mystical experience.

[105] McNeile, *op. cit.*, 127.

[106] It was God's spirit which, according to Mohammed, had impregnated Mary, the mother of Jesus.

[107] The 'Alids called it "inward light", by which God's commands are understood. *Cf.* Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 13.

[108] *Masnavi*, quoted by F. H. Davis, *Persian Mystics*, I, 96.

IV

RECORD OF THE MYSTICAL

Against the background which we have thus far drawn we may take the ninety-fourth chapter of the Koran as standing out with special significance in our exposition of the mystical elements in Mohammed. This *sura* is the record of a deep, peculiar and reassuring experience of God on Mohammed's part. It is even more significant when associated with other Koranic materials, e.g., *suras* 96 and 74, and lesser miscellaneous passages. We may take it as something of the Prophet's own commentary, in a moment of exaltation, upon his first revelations. It is both a record of revelation and a recollection of ecstasy. Our impression of its ecstatic character is heightened by the fact that it is a bit of true poetry throughout (see above, p. 21). It is a spontaneous, unstudied appreciation, a coherent unit of revelation, the climax of one of the many occasions when Mohammed planned and hoped for exactly some such result.

It would, of course, be silly to adopt any literal interpretation of this *sura* such as various traditions offer us. There is "the hapless tale,"[109] as Nöldeke calls it, which appears in various sources as explanation of the first verse of the chapter. In one source, Ibn Hisḥām's version, is an account of the cutting open of Mohammed's breast by Gabriel, the removal and the cleansing of his heart, and the filling of it with divine wisdom.[110] Buḫārī has the traditional saying of Mohammed, that "while I was stretched out within the Ka'ba enclosure someone (Gabriel) confronted me, made an incision," etc.[111] The comments in that connection record a difference of opinion as to whether the incision was made in the curtained wall of the Ka'ba or in

[109] *Gesch. d. Qorāns,* 75, note 2, "Die elende Fable."
[110] *Sira,* 105f.
[111] Houdas et Marçais, *El-Bokhari,* vol. 3, p. 37.

Mohammed's breast! Anas, the first link in the chain of this tradition, claims to have been by at the time Mohammed spoke and to have heard him say that the incision was made between the throat and the navel![112] Abu'l-Fidā (d. 1331) has it that once in Mohammed's childhood "two men in white came to him, threw him down and ripped up his belley."[113] Mohammed certainly told no such tale as these and others relate. It is highly improbable that the story was in circulation in any form during his lifetime. The general silence of both friend and enemy, during his Mission, with respect to any such phenomena in his youth may well make us hesitate to emphasize the so-called incident. The tale is merely an outgrowth of the *sura*.

Sprenger approaches a proper interpretation of the *sura* when he renders verse one as, "Have we not opened thy breast (and illumined it with our own radiance)."[114] This is somewhat in the vein of Baiḍāwī's comment on the verse. The full exposition by Baiḍāwī of this 94th chapter is worthy of attention as we pass along.[115] It will at once give us some acquaintance with Koranic commentary and shed light on our present theme. The exposition may be translated as follows:

(1) Have we not enlarged thy breast—have we not made it roomy, large enough for the contemplation of truth and the summons of mankind (i.e., the proclamation of the truth), for it was infinitely enlarged. Or, have we not enlarged it by the substance of wisdom which we deposited in it after the removal of the narrowness of ignorance from it. Or, (have we not enlarged it) with what was pleasing to us with regard to you, *viz.*, your receipt of inspiration when it had been

[112] We must bear in mind, however, that Anas ibn Mālik is one of the least trustworthy relayers of *Ḥadīth*.

[113] For a full discussion of the "heart-cleansing" see Sprenger, *Das Leben*, 162-178; *cf.* Hughes, *Dict. Islam*, 368.

[114] *Leben*, I, 310. "Haben wir dir night die Brust geoffnet (und erleuchtet mit unserm Lichte)."

[115] *Commentary, in loco.*

previously difficult. It is said to refer to the current story that Gabriel came to the Prophet in his youth or on the day of the covenant, took out his heart, washed it, and then filled it with faith and knowledge.

(2, 3) And relieved thee of thy burden—thy heavy burden which galled thy back—which made thee groan as a man or beast under a heavy burden,—being the load of his excesses before his apostleship;[116] or, of his ignorance of wisdom and of law; or of his confusion over, or his ignorance of the receipt of revelation; or, his people's waywardness, whom, although he saw it, he could not lead aright; or, their tendency (to evil) and their antagonism to him when he called them to Islam.[117]

(4) And have we not heightened thy reputation—through prophecy, and otherwise, such as the linking of his name with that of the Most High in the twin words of Testimony,[118] and making obedience to him equivalent to obedience to God, and causing his name to be invoked among angels, and bidding believers call upon him (in prayer), and bestowing titles upon him by which they may call upon him.

(5) Along with trouble cometh ease—trouble means, for example, the heavy load, popular waywardness and hostility,—ease means the enlarging of the heart, success in leading men to the right way, and obedience. Therefore do not despair of the spirit of God when things happen to make you sad.

(6) Along with trouble cometh ease—repetition for emphasis, or implying ease in this life *and* in the next, two kinds of ease, as when one says, The fast-keeping man gets joy, the fast-keeping man gets joy, and means joy when he eats (after the fast), and joy (of righteousness) when he meets his God.

[116] *Cf.* 48:1,2. Hughes thinks "the earlier and later faults," which Mohammed here mentions refer to his sins before and after the Call. *Dict. Islam,* 125.

[117] Flügel thinks the "burden" was poverty, and that the relief was marriage with Khadijah. *Geshichte der Araber,* 86.

[118] "I testify that there is no God but Allah; I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of Allah."

(7) And when you have finished informing (others), do thou worship even until weary, in gratitude for what we have enumerated of good things for thee in the past, and what we have promised thee in the future. It was also said that when thou hast ended fighting (for the faith), worship God even to weariness in calling upon him.

(8) And inquire of thy Lord fervently—ask questions of no other, for he alone is able to aid. It has also been interpreted (as meaning) to get people interested in asking forgiveness of him. The Prophet said, He who has read this *sura* is like one who, when I am sad, has come to me and lifted the sorrow from me. (Here ends Baiḍāwī.)

There is plainly to be seen in this the record of the expansion of the heart, the lifting from the back of a galling burden, exaltation of name, and the promise of alleviation. It is all more specific than mere enlargement of the bounds of experience, development in sympathy, and expansion of soul due to the warmth of new devotion.[119] Although the experience gave a sense of certitude, a swelling confidence, it was not one of unmixed joy; there is an undertone of humility,[120] of awe and even fear.[121] It is not a crisis such as those in which extreme mystics have come into ecstatic union with deity, as it is said Plotinus did four times, and Porphyry once. Rather, it is more of the type of Iamblichus, save for the all-important implication of social significance in Mohammed's case, where it was merely individual in the case of Iamblichus.

A very different but equally real experience is set forth in *sura* 17:1—the so called Night Journey (الأسرى),—which says,

[119] *Cf.* 2 Cor. 6:11,13. Isa. 60:5.

[120] There seems to be little indication of any crisis of the forgiveness of sin, save for 48:2. Baiḍāwī may have a hint of such an event in his expression ما ثقل عليه من فرطاته *Comm.* II, 408, line 9.

[121] *Cf.* v. 7, "Be instant" or, "be importunate," labor diligently as a bondsman of Allah, as his herald of Judgment.

"Glory be to him who carried his servant by night from the sacred mosque to the distant mosque whose precinct we have blessed, that he might show him of our signs—verily he it is who hears and sees!" Whereas the experience recorded in *sura* 94 is referred to Mohammed's immediate environment, that recorded here is referred to a distant part. Both, however, are definite and localized. The "journey" was made at a time (Baiḍāwī says it was one year before the Hijrah)[122] when Mohammed was strongly impressed with not only the sanctity but also the priority of Jerusalem, the journey's destination. The verse, therefore, stands as an appreciation of that holy city and of the religious values which it represented. Jerusalem is the place, says Baiḍāwī, where inspiration descends, and where the prophets have been worshipped from Moses on.[123] The verse represents also an extension of Mohammed's acquaintance in the field of religion, and a further knowledge of God's "signs."

It appears that Mohammed himself did not intend to make of it all that has come from it. His reference to the event is the briefest possible (17:1, plus verses 62 and 95), unless *sura* 53: 1-18 furnishes further details. We cannot be sure about verse 62. Baiḍāwī says it refers to the "Ascent" into heaven, unless it has reference to the entrance into Mecca (in 630), or to the defeat of the Koreish at Badr (624).[124] Nöldeke notes that it has no connection, at any rate, with what follows in the same chapter.[125] He makes it refer to the entrance into Mecca, being therefore a Medina passage. Verse one, however, as we can see, may stand quite unsupported. It is a clear record. So far as its date is concerned, it is really Meccan, and not, as Nöldeke holds, Medinan.

[122] *Comm.*, I, 533 line 1.
[123] Do., I, 533, line 8.
[124] Do., I, 544, 2.
[125] *Gesch. Qorāns*, 103.

Although Mohammed's statement is brief, much can be rightly made of it. Much indeed has been wrongly made of the event he mentions, for it lends itself to embellishment and spectacular interpretation. And yet here is an item which harmonizes well with the Prophet's characteristic revelation experiences. The frame of mind here portrayed is apparently quite analogous to that, for example, of the prophet Ezekiel, as seen in Ezk. 3:13f., "Then the Spirit lifted me up...and took me away...I came to them of the captivity at Telabīb...I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days." This vision of Ezekiel's has been accounted for by "catalepsy, hemiplegia, alalia, hallucination," etc., in order to combat any literal interpretation of a physical journey. The figures he uses are, however, merely "imaginative symbols," the suggestion for whose use having probably "originated in an ecstatic state of mind."[126] It can scarcely be doubted that Ezekiel had the experience (sensation) of being lifted up and borne away to distant parts. It is an altogether common sensation,[127] depending for its interpretation (by the experiment) upon a number of conditions. This was Mohammed's experience. But Tradition has toyed with the incident and builded out of it an elaborate occurrence. It has added to the original "night journey" to Jerusalem the "Ascent" thence into heaven—into the seven heavens[128]—on the white horse Burāq. Gabriel is his guide,[129] who leads him stage by stage, from the first heaven where Adam dwelt on and up through all to the highest heaven, the court of God and seat of Abraham (of whose religion Mohammed was the "restorer." See 2:119, 124, 129; 22:7). It is a very picturesque and familiar story.

A free condensation of Baiḍāwī's commentary on the essential

[126] Hast. *DB*, I, 817.

[127] The writer has had it frequently and has been carried while asleep at night even to unfamiliar and previously unvisited destinations. *cf.* James, *Varieties*, 66-68.

[128] *Cf.* 17:46; 2:27; *Mishcat*, 238.

[129] See Houdas et Marçais, vol. 3, 37-41; Sprenger, *Life of Mohammed*, 126-136; Baidāwī, *Comm.*, I, 562f.

verse will prove interesting and valuable.[130] He says that "the سُبحان ("Glory be to") is placed at the beginning of the sentence in order to assert the ability of God to do what is mentioned later on, *i.e.*, the carrying away of the Prophet; that ليلًا ("by night") as written, signifies a short time, or part of the night (as مِنَ اللّيل); that while Mohammed was in the Ka'ba (فى المسجد الحرام "in the sacred mosque"), or, some say, in the house of Umm Hānī, half asleep (بين النائم واليقظان "between sleep and wakefulness"), after the evening prayer (بعد صلوة العشاء), Gabriel brought al-Burāq .... Mohammed was carried away and brought back the same night (وَرجع من ليلته) .... saw the prophets and worshipped them. When the declaration of this experience was made in public the Koreish were amazed at the impossibility of it, and even some believers turned away. Abu Bakr was asked his opinion and answered that he would believe even stranger things than that on the word of the Prophet,—whence Abu Bakr's name الصدّيق, "the Credulous." Men familiar with Jerusalem by reason of travel there cross-questioned Mohammed about the visit. To meet the need of detailed information with which to satisfy his questioners, a miniature of the city itself was revealed to him. The Prophet's description, in consequence, proved satisfactory, but his questioners departed, insisting that it was all magic (سحر *cf.* 74:24). There is dispute whether the journey was of soul or of body. The majority hold it to have been a bodily journey. From Jerusalem, his original destination, he was transported to the highest heaven. The Koreish, to be sure, were skeptical of it all on scientific (astronomical) grounds. But it is true that God is able to do the impossible (انّ الله قادر على كلّ المكنات); he could speed the very body of Mohammed thus rapidly over so great distances. Thus Baiḍāwī.

[130] *Comm.*, I, in loco.

Now it is possible to find the grain of truth in all this story. The mass of tradition and commentary which accumulated around it testifies to its importance in the minds of Moslems, but without indicating its true character. Was it a dream? Mohammed, of course, put faith in dreams; they were to him real and prophetic; to see in a dream was to see true; good dreams were from God.[131] A tradition reports that Mohammed once said, "I dreamt that I was going from Mecca to a land in which there were many date trees; and my imagination went so far as this, that I should fly to Yemama or Hajer."[132] Another, that "two men came to me, and took hold of my hands, and carried me to a pure land."[133] These traditions, if authentic, are undoubtedly recollections of dreams. We cannot be sure, however, that Mohammed was asleep at the time referred to in 17:1. Baiḍāwī calls explicit attention to the doubt as to whether Mohammed was then asleep or awake.[134]

Was Mohammed speaking in mere figure, when reporting the experience? He did not say so. Those who heard his report did not so consider it. His use of figure and symbol would have aroused no controversy, for the Arab, like all true Oriental peoples, was accustomed to and took delight in the figurative and the dramatic. In his eagerness for effects Mohammed himself used drama and figure freely (*cf.* 3:5; 101:3,4). No, this "journey" was understood by the most of his followers to have been a physical and not a figurative journey, although 'Ayesha asserted that it was the spirit and not the body of the Prophet which God took on the journey. To his friends it was a cause of

[131] *Mishcat,* II, 388. Koran 12:4, 5, 24, 36, etc. *cf.* Matt. 2:13, "an angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream." *cf.* Ibn Khallikan, *Biog. Dict.,* I, 46, note 7; 47, 114f, 133; III, 228 (the dream of Tughril Beg that he was carried to heaven).

[132] *Mishcat,* II, 389.

[133] Do., II, 390, 392. Mohammed believed in the ascension of Jesus (*cf.* 3:47; 4:156).

[134] *Comm.,* I, 532, line 18. *cf. Sira,* p. 139, "My eye was sleeping and my heart was awake"—attributed to Mohammed.

grave concern,[135] and to his enemies an occasion for stinging ridicule (*cf.* 17:95). Baiḍāwī testifies (see above, p. 47) that the received opinion is, that Mohammed was actually transported in body to the Journey's end. His people generally have not really thought that the Prophet was speaking figuratively.

On the contrary there is no conclusive evidence whatever that Mohammed himself thought of this as an affair of the body, or that he said it was a bodily journey. His judgment was too sound to permit him to say that or to hold such a view. The Journey related to himself too directly; and he at least was not given to miracle. The matter of any miraculous power of his is practically dismissed by him in *sura* 17:92-97. And the use of miracle, at least for his benefit, was limited to the Koran as such and to the battle of Badr.

The "journey" is neither dream nor yet merely figure.[136] Nor is it a case of "shameless fabrication," as Sprenger[137] and others have insisted. It is not hallucination, or otherwise essentially pathological. It is mystic experience, a breaking through into the unseen world, a snatching-away in the spirit,[138] and withal, a conviction. The presumption is that Mohammed was at the time at prayer. The location is not an immediate concern. He may have been in the Ka'ba. We have definite records of his presence there for prayer. Omar on a certain night found him there and thus engaged.[139] It was his habit to pray there in the night-time.[140] Muir thinks that Mohammed was at Abu Tālib's on the night of the "Journey."[141] Baiḍāwī,

[135] *Cf.* Muir, *Mahomet,* ii, 220. Umm Hānī was much disturbed. Abu Bakr was not. (Wherry, *Comm. on Quran,* III, 56.)

[136] *Cf.* Muir, ii, 219.

[137] *Das Leben,* II, 528. *cf.* III, lvi.

[138] That the soul could and did leave the body temporarily was a common belief of the Arabs. See Toy, *Intro. to Hist. Relig.,* 420f, and Paton, *Spiritism in Antiquity,* 202. *cf.* Koran 39:43.

[139] Ibn Hishām, 228, line 5f.

[140] Houdas et Marçais, *op. cit.,* vol. 3, 37.

[141] *Mahomet,* ii, 220.

as we noticed, mentions the house of Umm Hānī in this connection (above, p. 47). At any rate, wherever Mohammed was, it was a night experience, as the Prophet himself says. And that he was at prayer is highly probable. Such circumstance is demanded by the very quality of the experience. Extraordinary results issued only from extraordinary conduct and occasions. There was something of the extraordinary back of this brief statement, something akin to what we shall discover in *sura* 73 (see below, p. 76). It is well known that many have had in times of prayer a unique experience remarkably similar to what we believe Mohammed had. Professor Pratt cites the case of one who testifies to "a singular feeling or sensation which comes to me when I pray, that while I pray I feel that my body is lifted up from the floor, and I feel light and floating, so to speak, in the air. Though my eyes are shut I see objects far below."[142] There is in the life of St. Anthony a parallel occurrence connected with the practice of prayer. "On one occasion," says Athanasius in his life of St. Anthony, "he stood up to pray at the ninth hour, and he perceived that his mind was exalted, and, what was still more wonderful, that whilst he was still on the earth his mind was transformed and he did not feel that he was upon the earth...the blessed Anthony was lifted up, and he received a pledge of the confidence of his labour, and he returned and took up his abode with himself."[143]

There are striking similarities in the case of the Apostle Paul, as seen in 2 Cor. 12:1-10, where Paul says, "I know a man, ... whether in the body, ... or out of the body I know not, ... caught up even to the third heaven ..... was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." With Paul this is the record of indubitably mystical experience, which was the occasion and ground of an unyielding assurance. It parallels remarkably the experi-

[142] *The Religious Consciousness,* 421f.
[143] Budge, *Paradise of the Fathers,* 54.

ence of Mohammed. Neither man allows himself to enter into details with regard to the event. Both were too sensible to make overmuch of the matter.

We must conclude that we have in these Koranic materials very fundamental evidence, nothing less than a clear record susceptible of no other adequate interpretation than that which we have put upon it here, namely, that it is a record of Mohammed's mystical experience of God.

V

MOHAMMED'S VIEW OF THE WORLD

It is necessary now for us to turn for a time from the Koranic record of the mystical and to consider something of the attitude of Mohammed toward "the world," as it stands over against the mystical realm with which the Prophet had to do. Mohammed's word for world is *dunyā* (الدنيا, 2:80; 18:43; 55:26; 87:16-17); it refers to this world here below. His use of it "quite recalls that of Christian preachers," says Carra deVaux.[144] The question regarding his attitude toward this "world" arises at once from a reading of the very earliest portions of the Koran. The Prophet is bidden in his second revelation to purify his garments (74:4), and separate himself[145] from polytheism[146] (74:5), and to look forward patiently to unrewarded service (74:6,7). Pride of earthly riches (96:6,7) and the desire of increasing already abundant material wealth (74:15, 12) are deemed fit occasion for divine wrath (74:17). In contrast, the fear of God is vigorously enjoined (96:11; 91:11; 92:17).

There are some indications of an attitude of pronounced asceticism on Mohammed's part. He preached the transitoriness of this life (47:38; 57:19), and the destruction and judgment of this world (103:2; 101:3; 99; 82; 81; 84), but he did so with a sanity which to us is the ground of no little astonishment. Reference has been made already (see above, p. 33f) to Mohammed's view that God himself is the owner of all things (20:5; 4:130, 131; 63:8). God is the Wealthy (60:6. *cf.* 4:130)—and he

[144] *Ency. Islam*, I, 1081.

[145] Not to "flee away from," of course; هجر means rather to "break off connections with." The *Hijrah* was not a "flight" essentially, as Carra de Vaux points out in *Ency. Islam*, No. 22, p. 302. It was a transition.

[146] "le mot رجز designé ici les idoles." Houdas et Marçais, 3, 490. *cf.* Baiḍāwī, *Comm.* II, 367, line 14, الشرك وغيره, "Polytheism, etc."

is also the Generous (96:3). Man is but the steward with whom God is "in standing account."[147] Professor Torrey says that "the fact of the final settlement was uppermost in Mohammed's mind at the time he began his public ministry, that all other facts were of minor significance in comparison."[148] For practical purposes only is man in possession of the Lord's property, from which he is enjoined to make "loans" to God (73:20) for the benefit of the poor (107:3; 90:15; 51:19), of the orphan (107:2; 76:8; 93:6), of the wayfarer, one's own relatives, and the captive (2:172), and for purposes of holy war (9:34).[149] Mohammed's asceticism was conditional.

One may not gather that the Prophet considered wealth *per se* to be an evil, or he would not have assented to the notion of man's temporary possession of God's goods. Rather, his insistence is against its abuse, its use as occasion for pride and arrogance (96:6,7), for unworthy discrimination (80:5,6), and for gluttony.[150] One must not trust in it at all (111:2; 104:3; 92:11; 69:28; 3:8,12), nor compete for it (102:1), nor hoard it (104:2; 9:34), for it is for man only a transient asset, and is so likely to lead him into forgetfulness of God (63:9). Since God is the chief concern, all else falls properly into secondary place.

From the beginning of his Mission Mohammed exhibits the consciousness of absolute dependence upon God and, in consequence, the notion of world renunciation. Men naturally desire this world's gear, he says, but God desires for them the next life (8:68),[151] and it is the beyond upon which men should set their minds. Wellhausen was led to say that "Islam had originally an ascetic bent."[152] It is clear that both Mohammed and

[147] Torrey, *Commercial-Theological Terms*, 8f.
[148] Do., 8f.
[149] Do., 44; Do., *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 55, line 5; *Mishcat*, II, 241.
[150] Torrey, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 55, line 2; Krehl, II, 211.
[151] *Cf.* Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 139.
[152] *Reste Arabischen Heidentums*, 241.

the earliest of the Companions, in his spirit, set their minds upon "what lay beyond" (الاخرة). Ibn Khaldun asserts that the fundamental principles which prevailed among the Companions (*as-Ṣaḥāba*) were, to be assiduous in piety, to give up all else for God's sake, to turn away from worldy gauds and vanities, to renounce pleasure, wealth, and power, which are the general objects of human ambition, to abandon society, and to lead in seclusion a life devoted solely to the service of God."[153] It is said that Abu Bakr chose heavenly rather than earthly riches.[154] His fortune, after he joined Mohammed, did indeed dwindle rapidly from forty thousand dirhems to five thousand, sacrificed to the Cause he served.[155] Within a few years of the death of Mohammed we see the arresting spectacle of the Caliph Omar holding back, as if he were proving true to Islam, the Moslem armies for a time from further conquest, fearing the demoralization of the Faith through the rapid acquisition of worldly spoil. There was something of true asceticism in the temper of the time.

It is not hard to discover that, after all, Mohammed's own opinion of worldly wealth was that of common sense. He was born in a humble home, grew up in straitened circumstances and knew poverty during his Mission. But he had married a fortune (a very humble fortune, to be sure) when he won the widow Khadijah,[156] and had personal knowledge of its values in the furtherance of his religious work. Also, he draws conclusions from the very character of God (God the Wealthy, the Generous, etc.), as well as speaks out of his own experience. There was the ascetic vein, but inordinate asceticism was in ill favor with him. He discouraged and rebuked it in others; and

[153] Nicholson, *Lit. Hist. Arabs*, 229.

[154] Houdas et Marçais, vol. 2, 585.

[155] *Ency. Islam*, I, 80-81.

[156] "Elle etait riche; son aisance provenait de bien accumulés par les bénéfices du commerce."—Huart, *Histoire Des Arabes*, I, 94.

it seems highly improbable that he himself ever carried the practice to great or even harmful extremes. He certainly did not abandon society, nor did he do all that which Ibn Khaldun says the Companions did. He insisted that men should be neither lavish nor niggardly, neither too liberal (17:31) nor wasteful (17:28), but rather observant of a proper mean in the expenditure of their substance (25:67). He emphasized sanity in social obligations. He ruled that out of justice to their heirs men might not give away the whole of their property.[157] Once having heard of the zealous asceticism of Abdullah, son of 'Amr ibn al-'Āsī, who, for example, would impose upon himself continuous fasts and spend whole nights sleepless in reading the Koran, Mohammed exhorted him to be reasonable, out of consideration for himself, his family, and his guests.[158] It was to a large extent a question of emphasis. Goldziher is doubtless right when he says that Mohammed's thoughts certainly lay nearer those sayings in which *zuhd* (زهد), abstention from everything worldly, is commended as a great virtue.[159] The life to come, to Mohammed, was indeed "better" and "more enduring" (87:17).[160] Both his thoughts and his conduct—save in the matter of his frequent marriages—did lie nearer *zuhd*. The ascetic ideal was valuable, but, on the other hand, asceticism was not valuable in itself; rather, it was of value, most of all, for the sake of the mystical, and both the ascetic and the mystical were avenues to higher and more than personal ends. There is a deft balancing evident throughout, an acceptance of but yet a subordination of the world, a *Weltvernichtung,* but for the sake of overcoming the world that now is and winning the world that is to come.

[157] *Mishcat,* II, 157.

[158] *Vorlesungen,* 144.

[159] Do., 146.

[160] "What he, *i.e.,* Mohammed, attributes here to Judaism ought to have been referred to Christianity," remarks de Vaux. *Ency. Islam,* I, 1081. We have much to do yet in this essay with the problem of Christian influence upon Mohammed.

VI

THE OBJECTIVE ORIGIN OF THE MYSTICAL

Having come thus far, seeing so much along the way that may be very properly called mystical and ascetic, the question naturally arises regarding any possible objective source and origin of these elements, this dominant strain of the mystical, and its attendant, contributory attitude of asceticism. We think we can find without much difficulty an adequate objective origin. We are concerned not only with the origin of these two remarkable aspects of Mohammed's life, but with their development also.

They stand in marked contrast, as we have already seen, in part, with the usual mode of life among the 6th century Arabs. The pagan level of morality was thoroughly hedonistic. The wine cup (الكأس) was freely employed.[161] de Percival shows in his *Essai* that the Arabs were very fond of wine and took great pride in their custom of gambling and drinking.[162] Wellhausen records in the *Reste* a saying of the Arabs, that "We journey hence into the unknown the thought of which we dismiss from our minds by eating and drinking."[163] The poet Umayya ibn as-Ṣalt, the Thakīfite, once got well used up in carousal with a Meccan sheikh.[164] The Caliph Omar has testified to the presence of *symposia* in Mecca in the days of paganism,[165] and to his own fondness for drinking in those days.

[161] Nöldeke, *Delectus*, 26, poem of al-A'sha.

[162] I, p. 350. "Les Arabes etaient très adonnés au vin, et d'anciennes poesies montrent qu'ils tiraient vanité de l'habitude de jouer et de boire"; *cf.* 2:216 and elsewhere for Mohammed's judgment of these companion vices.

[163] *Reste*, 229. "Wir fahren dahin zu ungewissem Ende und wir vergessen es über Essen und Trinken." Note well that they did not say "wir vergessen darüber Essen und Trinken."

[164] de Perceval, *op. cit.*, I, 350.

[165] Ibn Hishām, 227, line 19f.

Among other signs of those godless times were the extreme laxity in the relations of the sexes,[166] the common pastime of raiding, and the prevalence of blood-feud.[167] Nicholson says, "the ordinary Bedouin knew nothing of real piety,"[168] a statement in the manner of Wellhausen, that "in pagan days the fear of God had no thorough-going practical influence at all."[169] Mohammed found no nourishment in paganism.

There were, however, within the bounds of Arabia elements upon which the native genius of Mohammed could thrive. Various vital currents were flowing along the caravan routes of the day and eddying in the market places of the land, but it is to Christian currents most of all that we must look for light on our immediate problem. This is not to say that Christianity alone manifested in Arabia that type of life which Mohammed found suggestive and nourishing. It did, however, manifest those peculiarities which were most influential.

Christianity, we know, was widely disseminated in Arabia at the time of Mohammed. According to Wellhausen, it had flowed in along the paths of Aramaic culture. In *Arabia Provincia* and in *Palestina Tertia* it was the state religion of the paramount Byzantine power. It spread easily, though not deeply, southward into the soil of Arabia proper, entering the Hijaz "through slaves, commerce, and trade."[170] Al-A'sha, the famous troubadour contemporary of Mohammed, displayed Christian ideas which he had gathered from wine merchants of Hirah, whom he visited, and who themselves travelled all over inner Arabia. With reference to Mohammed's own native city Wellhausen says that "a superficial acquaintance with Christian ordinances, rites and doctrines, and especially many legends

[166] de Perceval, *op. cit.*, I, 351; *cf.* Robertson Smith. *Kinship and Marriage.*

[167] See the story of Ta'bata Sharran in Lyall, *Ancient Arabian Poetry*, 48-49.

[168] *Op. cit.*, 135.

[169] *Reste*, 224, "Bei alle dem hatte doch die Furcht Gottes in alter Zeit keinen tiefgehenden practischen Einfluss."

[170] *Reste*, 231.

and Biblical stories were without doubt current in Mecca.''[171] There were certain Arab tribes which were either altogether or partly Christian, including Tanūkh,[172] Qudāa, Rabīa, Tayy, and Tamīm,[173] Taghlib,[174] and Kelb,[175] northeastward of Mecca; Hanīfah[176] to the east in al-Yemāmah; and southeastward, the strongly Christian Najrānī.[177] ''The Christian Arabs had bishops and priests and churches, and even heresies of their own.''[178] In Yemen and in Abyssinia, as will be noticed shortly, Christianity flourished in highly organized form. Outwardly, therefore, the fact and forms of Christianity were familiar to the Great Arab. The specific and most important influence of Christianity upon Mohammed we have yet to see. However many and varied may have been the religious currents of his day; however devious the ways by which they came to mingle in his environment; however sensitive he may have been to the various manifestations of the religious spirit then in evidence; that which exerted the most peculiar influence upon him is something which we may designate as distinctly Christian.

In this we do not ignore nor do we discount the somewhat vague and intangible, but nevertheless real *ḥanīfite* movement of the day, a seeking after the pure, true faith. A dozen or so *ḥanīfs*, or 'seekers' were to be found in Yathrib (Madinah), Taif, and Mecca among the contemporaries of Mohammed. It is this movement, asserts Sprenger, of which ''Islam is the fruit.''[179] His judgment, however, is in error in this particular. He made

[171] Do., 231. ''Eine oberflächliche Kenntnis der christlichen Einrichtungen, Riten, und Lehren, auch wohl mancher Legenden und biblischen Geschichten war in Mecca ohne Zweifel verbreitet.''

[172] Ibn Khallikan, *Biog. Dict.*, I, 97.

[173] *Reste*, 231.

[174] Beladhuri (trans. Hitti, *Origins of the Islamic State*, 284-286).

[175] Lyall, *op. cit.*, 119. *cf.* pp. 21, 72, 93, of the same.

[176] Do., 119. *cf.* p. 93.

[177] Do., 119. *cf.* pp. 10-11, 21.

[178] Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, 35.

[179] *Das Leben*, I, 13f. See also Wellhausen, *Reste*, 232f; Muir, *Mahomet*, i, chap. III.

too much of the movement. He assumed it to have been an organization, and even that Mohammed was one of its members, for a time, at least. On the other hand, it is clear that Mohammed did not consider the term *ḥanīf* to apply to any particular religious body as such (see the Koran, 30:29; 22:32). He did not use the word at all in his earlier utterances, and when he did come to have use for it, it is the usage of a word already in circulation and denoting merely these independent seekers after a simpler, purer religion, and one holy God. He applies it to Abraham as the exponent of original, innate religion (21:52; 3:60; 6:79), and to those who, including himself, had rejected polytheism and the corruptions of the "religions of a Book."[180] Wellhausen rightly calls the *ḥanīf* merely a symptom, saying that "these seekers were not a separate, restricted phenomenon in Mekka, Taif or Medina, but rather the evidence of a mood which was widely current in Arabia before Mohammed and which characterized many of the noblest spirits."[181]

Ḥanīfism may have been a demonstration of Christian influence; but the *ḥanīf* was not a Christian as such. That there was, in the popular mind, some relationship between the two—and even some identity—is suggested by Wellhausen, who says, that 'seeker' and 'monk' were interchangeable terms, the former denoting originally a Christian holy man, that Mohammed received his first impulse in Mekka from earnest dissenters whom he identified with Christian ascetics by means of the term *hanīf*.[182] That the evidence does not warrant so strong a statement of identity is shown by Fr. Buhl in his article in the

[180] Macdonald, *Development*, 125. *cf.* Nicholson, *Lit. Hist.*, 149.

[181] *Reste*, 234. "Diese Sucher sind keine vereinzelte, auf Mekka und Taif oder Medina beschränkte Erscheinung, sondern das Symptom einer Stimmung, die in der Zeit vor Muhammad über ganz Arabien verbreitet war und manche der edelsten Geister beherrschte."

[182] *Reste*, 239-240. "Ḥanīf und Rāhib (the Christian monk) verwechselt werden können...Ḥanīf ursprünglich einen christlichen Heiligen bezeichnet...Muhammad hat von den frommen Dissenters in Mekka seine ersten Anregungen empfangen, und von diesen schlägt der Name Ḥanīf die Brücke zu den christlichen Asceten."

Encyclopaedia of Islam.[183] This does not greatly matter however, for our purposes. It is sufficient for us to know that there was just prior to Mohammed and contemporary with him an ascetic and monotheistic movement recognized by the term *ḥanīfite.*

Whatever the monotheistic, ascetic mood of the day, it was the Christian monk whose influence Mohammed felt most. Of this there are striking indications. Although Mohammed condemned the monk (*rāhib*) in general, and used the term *ḥanīf* of any one who has found the true way of religion, that fact can mean nothing more than that Mohammed felt the latter word to represent correctly, according to his evaluation, the essential thing in the career of the *rāhib.* It is, after all, the monk and not the *ḥanīf* who represents the effective situation. He it is whom we find to be the chief objective source of the mystico-ascetic in Mohammed. Let us, then, look closely at him.

[183] Vol. No. 22, p. 259.

VII

THE CHRISTIAN MONK

In the midst of pagan Arabian society the Christian monk was a very familiar and conspicuous figure. There can be no doubt at all about his definite and impressive presence. The Arabs recognized his presence and his character by the use they made of the term *rāhib* to denote certain unique aspects of religious life and activity. Abū Bakr, a *"tābi"* (not the future Caliph but a "convert or acquaintance of a Companion" of the Prophet, as the term signifies), was called "the monk of the Kuraish."[184] Abu Rukaiya Tamīm ibn Aus ad-Dari was originally a Christian, but embraced Islam and became one of Mohammed's Companions. He was so assiduous in the practice of devotion that he obtained from his associates the appellation of *Rāhib al-Umma,* "the monk of the people."[185] Abu Amīr had borne the name "monk" in Medinah, prior to his flight to Syria and his conversion to Christianity.[186] Qais ibn Zuhair, the chieftain of the Beni Abs, became a Christian monk in Oman.[187] In *"Ein anonymer alter Türkischer Kommentar"* there is, *à propos* of Koran 85:4, "a story ascribed to Mohammed, of a youth who learnt the true faith from a monk, performed miracles, and finally suffered martyrdom by being cast into a trench filled with fire."[188]

Christian monasteries were numerous, and organized monastic life was widely current. Dair Hālī,[189] Dair Ayyūb, and Dair Hannad were founded about 450 A.D. in Ghassān.[190] Hind, who died about 540 A.D. as queen of Hirah, founded a

[184] Ibn Khallikan, I, 263.
[185] Do., II, 21.
[186] Ibn Hishām, 562, line 2.
[187] Lyall, *op. cit.*, 120.
[188] C. F. Seybold, *Festschrift Eduard Sachau,* 327.
[189] *Dair* is the Syriac word used by the Arabs for *monastery.*
[190] Lyall, *op. cit.*, 99. *cf.* Sprenger, *Life of Mohammed,* 100, note 3.

cloister in her dominion.[191] A little southeast of the modern town of Najaf (Meshed 'Ali) was Dair al-Djamadjim, and near it was Dair Ḳurra.[192] West of the Euphrates, but in the Hirah section, was Dair al A'war.[193] These all figure in Moslem history. Not far away from the last named was Dair Yazīd which was confiscated by the Caliph Omar.[194] Many, if not all, of the *dairs* then in existence were taken and given Moslem names at the time of the Arab conquest.[195] It is most probable that there were monasteries in the Hijāz also. Khalāf ibn Khalīfah, a resident of Madinah, mentions in a poem a certain "ad-Dair," where his "lost ones" lay buried.[196]

In Africa, across the Red Sea from Arabia, monasticism held over to Mohammed's day from the time of its early foundation there. "During the fourth century (A.D.) Egypt was filled with monks of all kinds, and the monastic life was general there," says Budge.[197] Athanasius, in his life of St. Anthony, could say that "monasteries which flourish like the flowers of the springtime have been scattered throughout the whole earth, and the sign of the solitary ascetics ruleth from one end thereof to the other.[198] Pachomius founded about 320 A.D. near the modern town of Denderah, on the regular caravan route from Egypt to Medina *via* the Red Sea, the great and famous monastery of Tabenna, and organized there a large and influential fraternity.[199] There were also great communities of monks near the site of ancient Thebes. From Egypt Christianity and

[191] Lyall, *op. cit.*, 104; *cf.* de Slane, *Le Diwan d'Amro'l kais*, 5; Hitti, *op. cit.*, 406.
[192] *Ency. Islam*, I, 896-898.
[193] Hitti, *op. cit.*, 406.
[194] Do., 430.
[195] Do., 443.
[196] In this instance, a Medina *cemetery*. Lyall, *op. cit.*, 52.
[197] *Paradise of the Fathers* (edited, with Introduction by E. A. Wallis Budge), xlvii.
[198] Budge, *op. cit.*, 3.
[199] Do., xliii. *cf.* p. 283f. Tabenna, they say, was a saner foundation than some of its predecessors, *e. g.*, St. Anthony's (see Budge, xlii, and Migne, *Dictionnaire des Ordres Religieux*, I, 246, III, iii. *cf.* I, 250).

its then peculiar forms spread south into Abyssinia and thence into S. Arabia (Yemen). Lady Herbert records the fact that "the most noble remains of Christianity still existing (1867) in Abyssinia are the monasteries."[200]

In the century prior to Islam Abyssinia was on a higher plane of culture than any of its immediate neighbors,[201] and there was direct intercourse between it and Mecca. Ibn Hishām tells of twenty Abyssinian Christians who visited Mohammed and of Meccans who visited Abyssinia.[202] In the intercourse between the two parts slaves and other commodities were dealt in. The exchange of ideas, however, may not have been as extensive as that of goods and chattels. Abyssinian Christianity as such had only slight influence upon the Central Arabians as a whole, yet many Ethiopic words passed over into the Arabic and gained currency there. Mohammed himself made use of many such words and thereby gave them good standing in his own tongue. And he picked up meagre scraps of information about Ethiopic Christianity from slaves who retained in Mecca vaguely remembered religious items of their childhood.[203] Indeed it is said that Mohammed once had an Ethiopian slave, a certain Barakah, for nurse.[204] Though Mohammed himself was never beyond the Red Sea, Abyssinia seemed to his followers in a time of great distress a natural and hospitable place of refuge. The Meccans must have known the country well. Mohammed uses in his vocabulary of religion many words whose form may be traced with assurance to an Ethiopic origin,[205] thus testifying

[200] *Abyssinia*, 92.

[201] Nöldeke, *Neue Beiträge* (Strassburg, 1910), 46. Nöldeke is freely relied upon in the following treatment of the relation of Abyssinia and Arabia.

[202] *Sira*, 259, 144. Some of the Christians were monks. It may be, however, even as Ibn Hishām would allow, that the Christians were Najrānī, and therefore Arabian rather than Abyssinian.

[203] *Cf.* Sprenger, *Life of Moh.*, 159.

[204] *Cf.* Gibbon, *Decline*, V, 231. Huart mentions an Abyssinian, Omm Aiman (*Histoire Des Arabes*, I, 91).

[205] Following Nöldeke. See also list in Wellhausen, *Reste*, 232.

to an intimacy of intercourse. They include: انجيل (Evangel), جهنّم (Hell), شيطان (Satan), رَجيم ("stoned," used in the sense of "cursed," 81:25; 15:17; 16:100), جِبْت (an idol, 4:63), الحوّاريّون (Apostles), المنافقون (a technical expression in the Koran for "hypocrites," 9:65, 68, 69, 74, 102), فاطِر (Creator 30:29), مِنْبر ("high," a "seat," whence "pulpit"), and المصْحَفْ (book, holy book, 74:52). Mohammed, however, viewed surrounding Christianity with discretion.

We have said that for the monk and the monastic order as such Mohammed had little regard; nor had he high regard for the monastic ideal in general. Monasticism (رَهْبانيّة) was to him a way of life which was merely a "newfangled notion" of the Christians (57:27), and was not the proper way of trying to please God (see also 9:31, 34). Once, it is said, three men came to him to ask about approved Moslem practices, one man saying that he had the desire to pray all night; another, that he should never break a fast; the third, that he should avoid women and marriage. The prophet's comment was simply this, "as for me, who have more faith in God than you, and who revere him more, I fast and I break fast, I pray and I sleep, and I have taken wives unto myself."[206] Monkery, he taught, was not in accord with nature, and so he placed restrictions upon it. Indeed his judgment was, "Let there be no monkery in Islam"[207]—it was the wrong kind of "submission" (*islām*). Celibacy was not absolutely condemned by him; some, he thought, might not feel the need of marriage, nor be in a position to support a family. Yet, "whoever feels the need of marriage and is in a position to maintain a household ought to marry, for it is more respectable and in accord with mod-

[206] Hondas et Marçais, 3, 544; *cf.* Sprenger, *Leben*, I. 389.
[207] Goldziher, *Muh. Stud.*, II, 394.

esty."[208] Mohammed felt, as the priest Luther did later, the essential character of the natural life. "The married state is our way,"[209] said he. He forbade the state of the eunuch.[210] Among other pointed sayings on the subject are, "any well-to-do man who does not marry is no follower of mine," and "O how poor indeed is the man who has no wife."[211]

And yet monasticism furnished the background and something as well of specific content for Mohammed in the figure which most stirred the Prophet's imagination and enlisted his closest attention,—namely, the "solitary ascetic," the wanderer (السائح)[212] in the cause of religion, "the one who fasts" (*cf.* 9:113), the one in whom above all others was the fear of God.[213] Even more particularly, it may have been the anchorite who was of absorbing interest. He was a most mysterious and picturesque figure. Pre-Islamic poetry contains frequent allusions to him—*ḥanīf* or *rāhib*, or whatever the name, it matters little—in his solitary desert cell, "alone with the livelong night and its wearily lingering stars," "whose beacon is never quenched to wanderers of the night."[214] 'Amr al Kais makes mention of "the lamps of the hermit who dwells alone and pours

[208] Houdas et Marçais, 3, 545.

[209] Goldziher, *op. cit.*, II, 145.

[210] *Mishcat*, IV, 8.

[211] *Muh. Stud.*, II, 395. "Ein wohlhabender Mann, der nicht heirathet, gehört nicht zu mir." "O wie arm ist doch ein Mensch, der kein Weib hat."

[212] *Vorlesungen*, 151. Goldziher suggests that "those who fast" (السّائحون) who are mentioned in 9:113 may be reminiscent of the wanderers whom Mohammed had met. Penrice defines سائح as "one who wanders about in the cause of religion, and especially one who fasts." *Dict. Koran*, 75.

[213] رَهِب (*cf. rāhib*, monk) means "fear," *cf.* 59:13, "there is in their hearts greater fear of you than of God." "Fear of God" became an especially common monastic term. It is very common in the Koran, also.

[214] Lyall, *op. cit.*, pp. xlix, 21, from a poem by 'Abd al Mālik, a Christian of Najrān.

o'er the twisted wicks the oil from his slender cruse."[215] Labīd refers to the night and the burning wick and the wanderer in the highlands,[216] and to the Christian who pays his vow in solitude.[217] Macdonald says that "the very soul of Islam sprang from these solitary hermits....with their endless watchings and night prayers."[218]

It is possible, as Goldziher suggests, that Mohammed met some of these interesting individuals. At any rate, he knew them, their manner of life (9:113), their humility (5:85), and their influence (9:31). Some ascetics of a former day, in whose line of succession they were, had kindled greatly the Arab imagination. Crowds of Arabians had flocked to Antioch to see Simon of the Pillar.[219] And there was St. Anthony of whom it is said that "whenever they were journeying into Egypt and returning therefrom, the Arabs, by reason of the wonderful things which they saw in the man, always passed by the place where he was."[220] There circulated among the Arabs tales of the wonders wrought by various ascetics of the various generations. There is in Ibn Hishām one of these commonly known stories. It tells of Faymiyūn, "a good earnest man, an ascetic whose prayers were answered," who in his native Syria opened the eyes of the blind, and healed the sick; who was captured by Arabs and sold into Najrān, where his devotion and miraculous powers won converts and laid the foundation there of the Christian order.[221] Mohammed was heir of some and observer of others of these men and their wonders.

Let us reconstruct for Mohammed's own time the picture

[215] Lyall, *op. cit.*, 103, *cf.* F. A. Arnold, *Moallakat*, 31.

[216] Huber, *Lebīd*, xxxvi; *cf.* Koran 6:110.

[217] Nöldeke, *Delectus*, 101, line 17.

[218] *Development*, 125.

[219] Adeney, *Greek and Eastern Churches*, 156. *cf.* Frederick Lent, *The Life of St. Simeon Stylites*, 133 (*JAOS*, vol. 35, part II. October, 1915).

[220] Budge, *op. cit.*, 42.

[221] *Sira*, 20f. Faymiyūn's great feat was the miraculous destruction of the palm tree which was worshipped in Najrān.

of this holy man as Mohammed knew him. Our choice of materials will be limited to those which afford at once both delineation of the monk and also striking parallels, in thought as well as in very word, with materials of the Koran itself, although we leave to the reader for the time being an examination of the Koranic parallels for which references are freely given. It will be sufficient for us to rely mainly upon Palladius' *Paradise of the Fathers*[222] for the details descriptive of the Christian devotee.

"The principal work of a prudent monk was 'constant prayer' " (Palladius, pp. lvii, 45).[223] "A certain monk prayed always" (lvii). "The strenuous monk slept little" (lvii). Pachomius the monk of Tabenna tried to do without sleep altogether (lviii). Prayer was better than sleep.[224] Various expedients were resorted to in order to overcome sleep, as, for example, standing at prayer (43),[225] or taking one's prayer-station on the edge of a precipice (lviii), or sitting bolt upright and without support in one's cell (lviii).

The function of the monk's prayer was manifold. It was remembrance of God,[226] and health to the soul. In the "night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do move" (Psalm 114:20)[227] prayer and contemplation, and the reading of Scripture were especially valuable in keeping the devils at bay (lvii),[228] or in driving them off in fear (lvii, 23, 31).[229] Athanasius observes that "the whole race of devils is beyond measure an envious one,

[222] See note 197 above. Bracketed references as far as page 70 are to pages in Budge, unless otherwise indicated.

[223] *Cf.* Koran 73:2,20; 76:26; Lent, *JAOS* as above, 116.

[224] "Prayer is better than sleep," is part of the Moslem morning Adhan. *cf.* Koran 25:65.

[225] *Cf.* 25:65 and below, p. 76f.

[226] *Cf.* 20:14; 73:8; 29:44.

[227] *Cf.* 113:3, (شَرِّ غاسِقٍ "evils of the night"). *Cf.* 44:2,3.

[228] *Cf.* 73:4.

[229] *Cf.* 114:6.

and altogether jealous of all mankind, particularly of the monks'' (22).[230] There was among ''the Fathers'' widespread belief in all manner of evil spirits, fiery phantoms, and devils (23,43),[231] which were to be thwarted only by the most rigid discipline. Athanasius testified to times ''when we see no man, and yet the sound of the working of the devils is heard by us'' (24).[232] Encounters with Satan himself were frequent (34, 273).[233] ''First of all the soul is disturbed and terrified, and it heareth the sounds of a great tumult, and of the playing of musical instruments, ... and the soul becometh afraid'' (30). This is ''fright of the Evil One'' (30). There was indeed in the thought of men of that time an intense reality to the spirit world, and both respect for and fear of the powers which inhabited it. There is reason to think that for a time this was Mohammed's own attitude (23:72; *cf.* Ibn Hishām, 152f). Mohammed's fear of the *jinn* resembles that of the monks for the spirits whose ''wiles and crafts'' were to them so real. It is quite possible that Mohammed was much under the influence of the monkish conception of the invisible world. At any rate, both orders of beings, the *jinn* and the spirits, sprang from the same psychological soil. There were certain uncommon factors in the physical environment which might have aided their development. It is likely, as Budge suggests, that the imagination of the monks brooded on the strange figures found on the ancient tombs of Egypt (1), and that their imaginings entered much into

[230] *Cf.* 113:5.

[231] *Cf.* 38:33; 19:36; 26:210-212; 23:99. *cf. tā'ifu 'l-khiyāl,* the image of a loved one appearing in spirit to the vision of the lover who journeys, or is engaged in strife (Hughes, *Dict.,* 462; Ibn Khallikan, I, xxxvi).

[232] *Cf.* the *hātif* of Arabia, ''a voice which comes while the speaker remains invisible.''—*Ency. Islam,* No. 22, p. 289.

[233] The word ''Satan'' (شيطان *cf.* 25:31; 17:55, 63) came into Arabia much before Mohammed's time from Ethiopia. It had been applied to demons and to the snake. Mohammed restored its original meaning, says Nöldeke.

Abu Huraira talked unwittingly with Satan on three several nights (Krehl, II, 65; Torrey, *Ṣaḥīḥ,* 28, line 1f).

their musings on religion. It was thus that Mohammed viewed the magnificent ruins of Arabia Petraea. Macdonald says, "These Christian hermits and the long deserted ruins telling of old, forgotten tribes, that lie throughout the Syrian waste and along the caravan routes were the two things that stirred the imagination of Mohammed and went to form his faith."[234]

The monk in his vigils was enjoined to observe silence (lvi), and to speak to God "in a quiet voice" (lvii)[235]—the thought, perhaps, that "*gnosis* is nearer to silence than to speech." His spirit was to be in utter submission to the will of God, obedient under all circumstances of testing (lix),[236] patient to the last degree (lviii).[237] Humility was a virtue highly esteemed (lx), and tears were a sign of true penitence (lviii).

Mohammed on his part emphasizes the virtue of humility in prayer (Koran, 23:2), and calls attention to the futility and evil of pride (Do., 17:39; 45:7; 5:85). It may be more than bare coincidence that both the Christian monk and the Moslem Apostle made some use of cloths at times of religious exercise. Whatever the reason, it was the custom for the solitaries and some other kinds of monks to wear cloths over their heads (lvi). Budge says it was for "the double purpose of preventing them from seeing the faces of their fellows, and of keeping off the keen winds from their faces" (lvi). We remember that Mohammed was "wrapped in his mantle" at certain times of revelation.[238]

Yet with all the striking parallelism indicated incidentally by the various materials just presented, while our purpose in this

[234] *Development,* 125.

[235] *Cf.* 20:6; 17:110.

[236] *Cf.* 73:8, تبتّل اليه تبْتِيلاً, that is, live a life of separation from the world and devotion to God, to whom alone obedience is due. Penrice, *Dict. Koran,* 15. *Cf.* 72:14; 25:45,46.

[237] *Cf.* 74:7—a common note in Mohammed's early Mission and one heard to the very end. *cf.* 2:148, 172.

[238] *Cf.* 74:1; 73:1.

chapter has been chiefly that of reconstructing the character of the Christian ascetic known to Mohammed, it may be well to keep in our minds certain fundamental differences between the monk and the Prophet. Mohammed's mission demanded forms of assertion not at all characteristic of monachism. He could not attain his goal merely by the strict method of the individualistic ascetic who would even "let himself be trodden upon" (lxi). For Mohammed it was "better (so he said) to go erect on a straight path than grovelling on one's face" (Koran, 67:22). It was for Mohammed to take out of monachism what was of value to him and employ it in his own way for the special task he had to perform and for the ends he had in view.

VIII

MOHAMMED'S PRACTICE OF THE MYSTICAL

Having seen what a striking figure the Christian ascetic was in Mohammed's world and noted something of the general relation of that figure to the founder of Islam, let us now examine more specifically evidence of what the essential influence was which the monk exerted over Mohammed.

It is easily discoverable that Mohammed gave himself to the practice of the mystical. It is on the practical side, therefore, that immediate connection is made with the Christian monk. Mohammed looked with wonder and with favor upon certain aspects of the monkish life, and, with discrimination and for the sake of his own particular ends, set about imitating what he approved. It is a case of the novice patterning after the more experienced saint until he himself becomes an expert, even as St. Anthony emulated "a certain blessed old man."[239] But what a practitioner and an expert this Meccan novice became!

Although Mohammed in his early life may not have set out deliberately to become a prophet,—as Margoliouth, on the contrary, insists he did[240]—it is apparent that he made deliberate effort to find the true way of religion; in his youth he was a restless seeker, caught in the "*hanīfite*" current of his day. Then there came a time—possibly in sudden and startling fashion, as when Moses was accorded in swift vision a blinding sense of reality—when he realized that by his efforts at last he had attained to peculiar, "prophetic" powers. Now in the face of the real facts, to explain this experience of sudden power, as Margoliouth does, as the mere "assumption of the rôle of

[239] Budge, *op. cit.*, 7.
[240] *Mohammed*, 77f.

medium," due to "the receptivity of Abū Bakr,"[241] a faithful and devoted friend, is trivial—and unjust. The realization of his power and insight was no such assumption. He had not striven to become a mere medium. Mohammed was a sensitively organized and highly developed personality at the age of forty. It was then that the kindling flash came and he stood revealed to himself a prophet. He reaped the first fruits of his monkish exercises. "Revelation" for him became in time an art, and ceased being a matter of chance inspiration. He became, in a word, an expert in mysticism. Allah became an experience, and his prophet, a man possessed.

In his search for a vital faith—and for the sake of conserving what he found—Mohammed devoted himself to practices and disciplines in the manner of the Christian monk. It is clear that he strove for religious effects, that he employed methods fruitful of revelation. A recent writer says that any normal person may achieve religious insight, if he goes about it in the right way.[242] What then of Mohammed with his unusual and strong religious intuitions! Urwa ibn az-Zubair reports on the authority of 'Ayesha that the Prophet's retirement and seclusion in the cave in Mt. Hira was "for the practice of *tahannuth* (تحنّث)," or night vigils for stated periods.[243] The presence of God which he sought could not be gained nor held without practice. This Mohammed realized for himself and for his people—it is after all out of his own experience that provision is made for his people that they too may have and keep the sense of Allah. The rites which Mohammed practiced were all at first privately observed; even for some years after they had been prescribed for the first members of the slender Moslem community no public display of them was made. They were simple, although strenuous rites. In time they were elaborated

[241] Do., 89.
[242] R. L. Swain, *What and Where is God,* 169.
[243] Houdas et Marçais, 3, 507.

and used publicly; became the "pillars," in fact, of the new Faith.[244]

As we should expect, Mohammed puts a great deal of emphasis upon the practice of prayer. He does not give many details with regard to the methods used, but the few which he does give are very significant. The few are enough.

Mohammed assumed that prayer followed immediately upon and was conditioned by the idea of God (see above, p. 28f). "Prayer (دُعا)[245] is God's by right" (13:15), his who is "the hearer of prayer" (14:41). If a man pray to any other than God, it is unavailing. Men may possibly pray to others (72:19), but the others do not hear; moreover, they could not answer if they did hear (35:15). God, on the other hand, not only hears; he answers and bestows on whom he will both the necessaries of life (30:36) and spiritual blessings (38:72; 67:23). If the believer be in the proper frame of mind (23:2, 3),[246] and state of body (4:46), he may make direct and hopeful appeal to the Creator and Giver of good gifts. Prayer was communion with God, the Seer and Confessor. Mohammed seems not to have considered it, however, mere meditation. Although God does indeed know the thoughts and intents of the heart (20:6; 67:13), prayer might be either audible (20:6; 17:110), or silent (7:204). Although Mohammed made use of definite means (as we shall see) for inducing revelation, for obtaining results to prayer, prayer itself was never a magical process. It was not exorcism, nor coercion,—not a means of getting things, recovering lost property, and the like.[247] If the Fātihah (*sura* 1) is, as Muir thinks it is, Mohammed's prayer as a pagan,[248] it indicates very

[244] Houdas et Marçais, 3, 266.

[245] *Duā'* (دُعا) is prayer, supplication, invocation, petition.

[246] *Cf. Mishcat,* II, 385.

[247] For some magical effects of monkish prayers see Budge, *op. cit.,* 45.

[248] *Mohammed* (ed. Weir), 38.

well the absence even then of the magical element. Nor was prayer conceived as utter self-forgetfulness. Mohammed seems never to have passed, during a wakeful moment, completely beyond the grip of the physical world, although he was one of those who at times have actualized in them the power of immediate communication with the world of spirit.[249] Prayer was a union of the two worlds. It was a social experience. The Prophet did not seek release from the world, as the monk did, or say, the Indian *yogi,* "into an insentient identity with an attributeless principle,"[250] but rather did he seek knowledge and power for the reformation of the world. His induced states were not an opiate, but a tonic experience, something which inspired to action. There was for him a path leading from his *maḳām* (مقام cf. 17:81; or, مُصلّى, place of prayer) "back to the wide field of life." No means which he made use of clouded his purpose, weakened his will, or affected his judgment. He ran no risk of methods which would thwart his very mission.

In the matter of prayer, the remembrance and mention (ذِكر),[251] and the repetition (33:41)[252] of the name of God[253] was deemed a grave duty (29:44). To the monk, Satan could be "straightway driven away by the mention of the Name of Christ,"[254] or, as Mohammed expressed it, in somewhat better, more ethical, phrase, "prayer restraineth from the filthy and the blame-worthy" (29:44). The Prophet does not overlook the value of the slow and distinct recitation of the Koran, in addi-

[249] *Cf.* James, *Varieties,* 388.

[250] Cave, *Redemption, Hindu and Christian,* 235.

[251] The commentator 'Abdallāh ibn Abbās says اذكُرو means mention "with the tongue and with the heart."—Sell, *Religious Orders of Islam,* 32.

[252] *Cf.* James, *op. cit.,* 383 with regard to the effects of repetition.

[253] Just as the name of Jesus came to supersede in Egypt the names of the former gods of the people (Budge, I), so Allah, as we have seen (p. 31) came to be *the* name of God for the Moslems.

[254] Budge, *op. cit.,* 44.

tion to the use of God's name (73:4; 29:44; 35:26; 8:2), but if we may judge by his own words, he has no notion that the mere reading has in itself magical value, as was the idea, in part at least, of the monk,[255] or as Moslems themselves came later to hold; for example, according to Ibu Batuta, the jovial, wide-travelled Moor, the Maldive Islands were converted to Islam by a Moslem at whose reading of the Koran there plunged into the sea an evil *jinn* which had come among the infidels as "a ship filled with candles" and taken severe toll of the islanders.[256]

Mohammed considered prayer to be the natural attitude of all creatures (24:41), as well as man, and held that religion to be of no value in which there was no prayer.[257] However, prayer was not only a matter of general attitude, such as *duā'* connotes, in the main; it is also defined in terms of *ṣalāt* (صلوة, 96:10; 11:116; 17:80; 2:239), "prescribed duty for stated times" (4:104), just as fasts were prescribed for certain special days (2:179,180). Although the Koran nowhere designates all at once the five times daily which came to be the stated times of daily prayer, and although the term *ṣalāt* is used now and then in a general sense (*cf.* 9:104; 14:42), there is the particular act as well as the general attitude of prayer.

Mohammed's use of the two terms is scarcely different from any discrimination between prayer and prayers, and does not affect the emphasis he laid upon the mystical practice of prayer. For this exercise Mohammed recognized the special value of "solemn midnight's tingling silentness." When night had "spread her veil" (92:1), there was the freest and best occasion of inspiration (73:5, 6-7. *cf.* 76:26; 44:2,3; 25·65; 17:81). Vigils are, therefore, a most prominent feature of Mohammed's religious career. His practice of prayer, and his vigils in partic-

[255] Budge, *op. cit.*, lvii.
[256] S. Lee, *Ibn Batuta*, 179.
[257] Abu 'l Fidā, *Life of Mohammed*, 127.

ular may be easily appreciated from an examination of Koran 73:1-8:

1. O thou who hast wrapped thyself up,[258]
2. Stand up all the night, save a part of it,
3. Half of it, or less—
4. Or more. Repeat Koranic passages slowly and distinctly;
5. For we shall cast upon thee a weighty word.
6. Truly, with the coming of night inspiration is clearest and words are most correct—
7. By day thou art much occupied.
8. Make mention of the name of thy Lord, and devote thyself wholly to him.[259]

This is clearly a passage, not of revelation material, but of revelation process, a vivid picture of the night vigil with its "remembrance," its "reading," its "posture," and its "inspiration." Revelations were received by Mohammed when in other than a standing posture (see 74:2, where he "rises" from a prone position, most likely),[260] and under other conditions than those of darkness, and without any elaborate preparation for them.[261] And yet, so far as the posture assumed in 73:2 is concerned, we feel that it is best indicated by the words, "stand up". قُم might mean simply to "get up", as it evidently does in 74:2, were it not for the context here. Baiḍāwī explains the purpose of قُم in 73:2 by the phrase, الى الصلوٰة, "for prayer", but that doesn't help with the primary meaning of the word. And the context itself might allow, instead of "stand up", the meaning "persist in," "keep at," "engage in," in the manner of

[258] Vth form of the verb. We have ventured the suggestion that the covering was of the head, in the manner of the monk (p. 69, above).

[259] Among other things the mention of the name of the Lord is a test of good conscience. 22:36; 8:2.

[260] Baiḍāwī on 96:10 says that Abū Jāhl once threatened to put his foot on the neck of the Prophet at prayer.

[261] Krehl, II, 211; Torrey, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 54, line 19.

4:104; 2:172.[262] When the transitive اقام is used no other meaning is possible than one of these latter. Nevertheless, we are well within our rights in making قُم mean "stand up," just as we translate حينَ تقوم, "when thou standest." It is not here merely a matter of etymology. Standing at prayer was Mohammed's early practice, after his conversion. 'Ayesha is authority for the statement that Mohammed and his followers actually held to these night vigils for a whole year till their feet (*n.b.*) were swollen; then 73:20 was revealed in alleviation.[263] At first there were no sick, nor infirm, nor many travelling about, and the counsel of perfection could be followed. 73:20 indicates some of the changes which soon came in the circumstances of the new order (see also 3:188. In amplification of 73:20, Baiḍāwī says, "Pray standing; or, sitting, if not able to stand; or, reclining, if not able to sit").[264] Standing was most likely to aid in the attainment of the results desired,—certainly by night. It was the monkish habit, as we have seen. To be sure the standing posture was common to both Jew and Christian alike. It was the monk, however, who was conspicuous in the matter by reason of the ends he had in view.[265] It was the monk who was getting by special process the results which Mohammed desired for himself in yet larger measure. Mohammed may have recognized explicitly and publicly his debt to the monk, if the story is true, as Ibn Hishām tells us, that Mohammed, while in conversation

[262] Something of the meaning of قام may be further seen from Nöldeke's comment upon قويم دينهم, "religio eorum (the Ghassānids) est ορθόδοξος," *i. e.*, they "stood fast" in the faith. *Delectus,* 96, line 4. And for the "*Iqāmat as-Ṣalāt*" see Brockelmann in the *Sachau Festschrift,* 314-320. The meaning in that phrase (*iqāmat as-Ṣalāt*) is "observe," or "lead" prayer (as in the case of an *imām*). *Cf.* Ibn Hishām, 143, line 19 for an example of *aqām,* meaning "persist in." See above p. 33, note 81, also.

[263] Klein, *The Religion of Islam,* 133. *cf.* Rodwell, *Koran,* 25, note 1; Wherry, *Commentary on the Quran,* IV, 193.

[264] *Comm., in loco.*

[265] *Cf.* Lent (*JAOS,* as above, 120).

with the Christian, Ninevite monk Addas, referred to a certain Yunas of Nineveh as his brother, because he was a prophet also,[266] Yunas as a "prophet" having attained prophetic powers by ascetic practices. However that may be, there is no other external fount and origin, if we discard the Christian monk, which may be held to account for Mohammed's adoption of this method of realizing the Divine, as there is no other than the mystical as adequate explanation of Mohammed's compelling revelations.

[266] Ibn Hishām, 280-281.

IX

THE ANGEL GABRIEL

The essence now of the whole matter, in so far as we have considered it, is, in short, this: (1) Mohammed found revelation-value in anchorite-monkish exercises; his revelation-experience was direct and immediate—mystical, in fact. We cannot, however, consider the presentation of our subject complete until the place and office of Gabriel are understood. Gabriel has been thought of usually as the medium of revelation.

In this connection we are concerned again first of all—as we shall see—with the charges against Mohammed that he was a "poet" (a شاعر 69:41; 36:69. *cf.* 26:225), a dreamer (أَضغاثُ أَحْلام 21:5), a "soothsayer" (كاهِن 69:42. *cf.* 25:32, القرْآنَ مَهْجوراً "the Koran a vain babbling"), one "bejinned" (مجْنون 81:22; 15:6), or bewitched (سحر 38:3. *cf.* 21:3), and a forger of revelations (تقوّلَ in 69:44; 52:33; or, إفْتَرَى in 21:5; 25:5; 32:2; 11:16). The various charges of imposition were many and insistent and they weighed heavily upon the Prophet (68:10-16). Among various evidences of this, it appears that on one occasion he felt called upon to pronounce ten "woes" upon his accusers (*sura* 77).

After all, there is nothing essentially strange about such charges as were made against him. Mohammed himself observes that no prophet has ever come who was not derided (51:22; 54:3; 15:11). Derision, to his mind, helped establish his office. Nevertheless, he gave the most vigorous attention to the refutation of his critics. It was to the utmost degree necessary for him to be looked upon as a prophet, to be accepted at his real value, and nothing less. It was not an easily won contention. The Koran itself bears witness to many years of

the struggle toward the great goal (*cf. sura* 26).[267] Had Mohammed really been what his enemies asserted he was, they surely would have made a case, and succeeding centuries would have verified their judgment, for, as Zuhair says,

> "Whatever quality there is in a man, even though he thinks it concealed, it is known."[268]

It would not have been surprising if Mohammed had indeed seemed to some of the sincere-minded, whether enemy or friend, to be of the order of poets. Like many a poet he hurled menaces at his enemies (104, 92:14; 17:61; *cf.* 11:84), using the poetic method of satire (107:1,2; 89:20).[269] His literary form of expression, the *saj'*, or rhymed prose, had been " the special form adopted by poets, soothsayers, and the like, in their supernatural revelations, and for conveying to the vulgar every kind of mysterious and esoteric lore."[270] And he could extemporize in verse, as he doubtless did at times.[271] Furthermore, he did not hesitate to use ideas and words suggestive of the poets: in 105:3 the "hawks" (صُقور, applied to the nobles of Kinda) of the poet Umayya become the "birds" (طَائِر) which seal with clay-stones the fate of Abraha's army of the Elephant;[272] and 68:15, 83: 13, 26:3, 69:20, etc., might remind one of the "signs" of Umayya, or of the "account" of Zuhair.[273] Also, Mohammed used oaths after the fashion of the pagan poets, and with possibly something of their notion of the necessity and efficacy of

[267] Note that *Sura* 26 belongs to the seventh year of the Hijrah.

[268] وَمهْماتكن عند امْرِئٍ مِن خلِيقةٍ وَإِن خالها تخْفى على النّاسِ تعْلَمِ

F. E. Johnson, *The Seven Poems*, 88.

[269] *Cf.* Wright, *Christianity in Arabia*, 160; Nicholson, *op. cit.*, 107.

[270] Nicholson, *do.*, 74.

[271] Do., 108, for one of many examples of Arab *ex tempore* verse.

[272] *Cf.* Ibn Hishām, 40, lines 12, 15f.

[273] Torrey, *Com-Theol. Terms*, 10.

them (*cf.* 74:35-37; 93:1,2; 86; 77:1-5; 89:1-3; 52:1-6; and 90:1-3 with, *e.g.*, Ahlwardt, *Six Poets,* pp. 7-8).

Indeed Mohammed's private opinion of poets was likely not one of entire antipathy. He ventured at times to approve of them. They could—if they chose—utter true words, he thought. He said of this verse of Labīd's,

> الا كل شى ما خلا الله باطل, "know that everything is vanity but God",[274]

that they were the truest words ever uttered by a poet. He felt grateful for some verses which Hassan wrote in his praise.[275] In what sense then can it be said that he had an aversion to poetry,[276] that he "disliked and feared poets in general?"[277] And what inference may we draw from the fact that he called a certain poet, 'Amr al-Kais, "their leader to Hell-fire?"[278] He does at times denounce poets most vigorously (26:221-227).

It is not because the poets were men of necessarily low estate, and their poetry a thing to be despised; quite the contrary is true. The Arabs were fond of fine poetry, and gave it the name of "lawful magic,"[279] along with certain terms of great praise. Poetry was, in the *Jāhiliyya,* both a pastime and a recognized means of livelihood.[280] Poets were numerous and held places of honor and influence.[281] In the list one finds the names of warriors, governors, and kings.[282] Certainly "poet" was not a term of contempt! Mohammed's objection was manifold, as the charge itself was, but the core of it all was that the term

[274] *Cf. Mishcat,* xxii, chap. X.
[275] Hirschfeld, *Diwan of Hassan,* 6.
[276] Goldziher, *Muh. Stud.,* I, 53.
[277] Hirschfeld, *op. cit.,* 6.
[278] Goldziher, *op. cit.,* I, 52.
[279] Ibn Khallikan, III, 344.
[280] Do., III, 346. *cf.* I, 89.
[281] Wright, *op. cit.,* 159; *JRAS,* Jan. 1914, 65.
[282] Ibn Khallikan, I, xx; Muir, *Caliphate,* 23f.

was applied to him as an explanation of his inspiration.[283] He deplored the theological implications and associations of the term (*cf.* 36:69). That was the fear, and that was the contumely of it. To him Allah alone was the source of his inspiration. It does not appear that Mohammed was ever himself really fearful that he was merely "bejinned." Such fear might have come to him with his first startling revelation and have been a very natural accompaniment; but the Koran does not bear witness of it. He may have had cause for a time, as Tradition asserts, to doubt his mission—but that is another matter, which does not prove on the Prophet's part the consciousness of "possession." Allah was his inspiration. Allah was the goal of his endeavor. It was that which he was anxious to impress upon his contemporaries. That was, to him, the clue to his apostleship. This, then, explains his public aversion to whatever detracted from what he felt to be his true character and calling.

And this explains Gabriel. That is, Mohammed had in Gabriel a recognized angel of inspiration,[284] who was neither *jinn* nor spirit. There was, therefore, in the employment of Gabriel inherent and compelling contradiction of Mohammed's "poetic" genius, the possession of which had been the burden of hostile charges. Gabriel, too, satisfied a certain popular fancy, and thus fulfilled an essential condition of the prophetic office. He is to Mohammed a strong tower of defense, and his share in the revelation-process does not in any way compromise the Prophet and his experience in the eyes of his contemporaries.

Even so it cannot be said that Mohammed made overmuch of Gabriel. He is at most merely included in the revelation, when-

[283] He was, to his opponents, a bejinned poet (37:35). See Wellhausen, *Reste*, 155-168 regarding the theory of poetic inspiration by *jinn;* also Paton, *op. cit.*, 236. *cf.* above p. 19f.

[284] Klein, *op. cit.*, 5f. *cf.* Dan. 8:16,9:21; Lk. 1:19,26.

ever he does figure at all in the record. He may well have been in Mohammed's mind analogous to the part of Christ and the Virgin Mary in the mystical experiences of the monks and nuns. And in no small sense the office of Gabriel insures the impersonal character of the Koran (the "Reading"), and supplies indirect argument against the charge of Mohammed's forgery of the revelations.

This is not to say that Mohammed invented Gabriel, or merely adopted him insincerely for his own ends, for the angel figures as a very real item,—so real that when Mohammed was asked to describe him (*cf.* 17:87), he mentioned a real person, a young man, named Diḥya ibn Khalīfa, of the tribe of Kelb.[285]

In the Koran Gabriel is mentioned by name only twice: (1) as the one who by God's leave caused the Koran to descend upon Mohammed's heart (2:91),[286] and (2), as one who is associated with God, and just men, and angels as a special guardian over the Prophet, as his protector against conspirators (66:4). Both references, it will be noted, are late. The second assigns to Gabriel a function of the angel Michael who, according to the Jews, "fights for God and the chosen people."[287] There are, in addition, allusions which may be referred to Gabriel. He is "one mighty in power" (53:5), "the faithful spirit" (26:193), one of the "angels" (37:150. *cf.* vv. 160-166)—although different from the rest of them (97:4, 70:4)—, the "holy spirit" who, at such times as God commanded,[288] brought down the Koran and "taught" it to Mohammed (16:104; 19:65; 17:87; *cf.* 81:23 and 53:7-9). It was he who "strengthened" Jesus, son of Mary (2:81, 254; 5:109), as Mohammed thought.

[285] Huart, *Hist. Arabic Lit.*, 35. Note that Mohammed never described or "likened" *God.*

[286] *Cf.* Houdas et Marçais, 3, 253-254.

[287] Hast., *DB*, vol. 2, 75.

[288] Gabriel was never "evoked" by Mohammed. Little weight can be attached to such references as the calling up of Gabriel on the demand of Hamzah (Margoliouth, *Mohammed*, 155-156).

Over against the Koranic record stands the highly colored and artificial Traditional account. Therein Gabriel is made to appear to Mohammed prior to the very first revelation.[289] Baiḍāwī says that the revelation of *sura* 74 was preceded by a vision of Gabriel which terminated the time of suspense, the Fatrah.[290] Tradition naturally and inevitably understands "spirit," "angel," and "messenger," whenever they occur in the Koran, to refer always to Gabriel, and that he is the speaker in all the revelations.[291] This is the وحْى قران, or "Koranic inspiration," which is "the only kind of inspiration admitted (by some authorities) to be in the Qur'an."[292] As we might expect, the good offices of the angel who had served Mohammed in all things were sought by others besides the Prophet. In 657 in Yemen Gabriel in the name of God bade Uwais al-Karānī become an ascetic.[293] The Prophet's grandsons are said to have worn amulets filled with down from Gabriel's wings![294]

There was, however, for Mohammed nothing of extravagance in the use of Gabriel. The angel was for him as for the Jews, the bringer of the divine into the phenomenal world.[295] He was more; he was the synonym and symbol of the Prophet's immediate consciousness and perception of the divine. He was the Prophet's "companion" in the experience of the mystical. He was Mohammed's best defense against the ascription of "poetic inspiration" and the charge of fabrication.

[289] Houdas et Marçais, 3, 507-508.
[290] *Comm.*, 397, line 1.
[291] Rodwell, *Koran*, 19, note 3.
[292] Hughes, *Dictionary*, 213.
[293] Do., 116.
[294] Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 278.
[295] *Cf.* Hast., *DB*, vol. 2, 75.

X

"THE INSPIRED MAN"

We have seen in Mohammed a many-sided personality, one to whom many different types of men might appeal, and one to whom a diverse host have appealed. It is not surprising that interpretations of him vary. Extremists have found their roots in him, for example, the *faqir* (see 10:63; 34:32; 35:16; and Krehl, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, II, 105, 16f.), the hermit, the dervish (*cf.* 24:30), and the Ṣūfī (*cf.* 2:109; 18:17), who have taken an attitude usually of utter dependence (توكّل) upon God. But Mohammed was not altogether "quietistic." He displayed no exaggerated "dependence" upon God. He was a practical prophet. He was not in the hands of God as the corpse is in the washer's hands.[296] He was no mere "child of the day" (ابن الوقت) with no thought of the morrow. Nor was he indifferent to the things of the body, to sufferings and to buffetings. He had ends in view which demanded strength both of body and of spirit. He put his confidence in God, but did not neglect "to tie the camel's leg."[297] He lamented the dishonesty and greed of his time, the indifference of his people to spiritual values, but he did not recommend as a cure for all this the denial of the world entirely. "The dust of the actual" covered the way he trod, and prudence was a constant companion on the journey. It is evident—to us, at least,— that he offered no social panacea, no thoroughgoing reform of the Arabian order. Very wisely he put his Paradise in heaven and not upon earth. That he nevertheless did have so large and so effective a program of reform for this world is a matter of continuing wonder and admiration, not to be explained by any casual theory of the abnormal.

[296] *Vorlesungen*, 153.

[297] An expression, significant of precaution, quoted in Davis, *Persian Mystics*, I, 89.

Mohammed was an expert in things mystical who could, after all, occupy himself with the details of life (*cf.* 2:180 f)[298] without ignoring or losing the invisible world. Indeed his administration of worldly affairs and the enduring success of his earthly mission were linked up with his insight into the invisible. Realizing this, he sought diligently to extend his limited knowledge of the invisible world. At the very risk of self-deception[299] and the charge of imposture he reached out into the beyond (*cf.* 19:81) and found there means to augment his native capacity. After all we may apply to Mohammed, as a fairly full measure of the man, the words which Ibn Khaldun applied to "the inspired man" (any inspired man), namely, that "at times he is completely absent though in the society of others..... he seems to be in a cataleptic fit, or in a swoon. This, however, is merely apparent; for in reality such an *ecstasis* is an absorption into the invisible world; and he has within his grasp what he alone is able to conceive, which is above the conception of others."[300] In the case of the Great Arabian Prophet, "the inspired man" is able to make social use of his experience, to convince others of his capacity and to work out his conception in action.

[298] Houdas et Marçais, 3, 262-263.

[299] We cannot accept the theory that Mohammed was self-deceived. He merely ran, at most, the risk of self-deception.

[300] Sprenger, *Life of Mohammed,* 111.

SUMMARY

Bearing in mind our discussion, as a whole, of the evidence which shows Mohammed in what is after all an essentially new light, we offer now this concluding summary of our case.

Mohammed was a mystic in the technical sense, and that, too, not merely in mental attitude but in habitual practice. Certain methods of self-hypnotism, of inducing trance-like conditions, were well known among the mystics of the highly civilized lands adjoining Arabia, and among certain dwellers in Arabia itself. Mohammed in his religious searchings had become informed of some of these, and practiced them, in a crude way, in perfect good faith; persisting in the exercises through which "divine power" was to be gained, until at last the result came. He had every reason to believe, and no reason to doubt, that the "ecstasy" which came upon him was of divine origin and intended to be the occasion of a divine communication; it was precisely for this purpose that the monks and other celebrated mystics strove after the ecstatic trance. While the excitement of the abnormal state continued, his thoughts and words were divinely directed; the fact that the production and duration of the "fits" came more and more fully under the control of Mohammed's own will did not in the least affect their character as the means of God's revelation to his chosen prophet. The success of his effort was proof of his mission, and the doctrine of "Mohammed the Prophet" and the growth of a new sacred book followed naturally.

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